

BLACK, WHITE, AND RED ALL OVER

**A Cultural History of
the Radical Press in
Its Heyday, 1900–1917**

LINDA J. LUMSDEN

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To every journalist
who ever took a risk to tell a truth

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INTRODUCTION

THE RISE OF A NINETEENTH-CENTURY RADICAL PRESS

Let the voice of the people be heard—

ALBERT PARSONS

■ Albert Parsons and his three fellow editors looked like ghosts standing on the gallows. White muslin shrouds draped their bodies from neck to toe, hiding the thick leather straps that pinned their arms at their sides and the handcuffs that locked their hands behind their backs. White hoods tied at their necks made them faceless before some two hundred spectators at their execution in Chicago's Cook County jail. Outside, bayonets affixed to the Winchester rifles of three hundred police officers glinted like a necklace around the building.

As guards fastened nooses around their necks, each of the men shouted a farewell in defiance of the sheriff's orders. "Let me speak, Sheriff Matson," Parsons called out last. The anarchist editor of the *Alarm* newspaper believed in the word. His voice rose as if he were launching into another of the hundreds of speeches he had delivered to tens of thousands of workers:

"Let the voice of the people be heard—"

The trap floor snapped open and guillotined Parsons's final word. Less than eight minutes later, at 12:06 P.M. on November 11, 1887, Parsons and fellow anarchists *Arbeiter-Zeitung* editor August Spies and *Der Anarchist* editors George Engel and Adolph Fischer were dead and the Haymarket martyrs born.¹

■ ■ ■

These anarchist editors were part of the radical press that sprouted like wheat fields across the United States in the late nineteenth century. Hundreds of radical newspapers and magazines in their heyday between 1900 and 1917 offered sharp critiques of the emerging corporate state that remain relevant in light of gaping

twenty-first-century social inequity. Anarchists, socialists, and the Industrial Workers of the World opposed capitalism and demanded workers own the wealth they produced. This revolutionary demand pit them against the one percent of Americans who acquired half the nation's wealth in what Mark Twain termed the "Gilded Age," the gaudy decades from Reconstruction to the late 1890s when rococo mansions and golden cufflinks flaunted the divide between rich and poor.² The *New York Tribune* counted 4,047 millionaires in 1899, the year someone pinpointed John D. Rockefeller's wealth at \$815,647,796.89.³

At the opposite end of the income scale, 15 million immigrants poured into the United States between 1900 and 1915, as many as entered during the previous forty years. Many labored an average of eighty-four hours per week stitching clothing in windowless apartments in one hundred thousand squalid tenements packed onto Manhattan's Lower East Side.⁴ The rise of the factory dehumanized workers in dull, repetitive, and often dangerous jobs, while the overnight eruption of industrial mining bound a new class of workers to ramshackle company towns that speckled mountainsides. An estimated thirty-five thousand American workers died annually in accidents.⁵ Even more than industrialism, the rise of corporate capitalism forced a reenvisioning of the social contract as the century turned. Sunburned farmers with brows as furrowed as the mortgaged fields they plowed stumbled beneath their debts to distant eastern capitalists. Industrial trusts were omnipotent. Strikes lit up the landscape like the new electric moving signs illuminating Broadway—nearly thirty-seven thousand strikes ignited between 1881 and 1905.⁶ Workers who tried to organize often faced private guards and government militia armed with Gatling guns and bayonets.

Relevance of the Radical Press

In this David-versus-Goliath battle between working-class Americans and industrial capitalism, radicals' preferred ammunition was the word.⁷ Radicals revered the power of the press. As an *International Socialist Review* contributor declared in 1901, "The only hope of an adequate representation of the socialist movement in the field of journalism is the establishment of a socialist press."⁸ Although capitalism never succumbed in the United States, workers' rights to unionize, regulation of the trusts, workplace safety laws, and a federal social security net all can be traced to demands championed by the radical press in the early 1900s. The IWW's *Industrial Worker* defended free speech, and anarchist

Mother Earth battled for birth control. The socialist *Call* exposed police abuse of strikers in Bayonne, New Jersey, and the *International Socialist Review* reported on exploitation of pineapple pickers in Hawaii. The *New Review* and the *Masses* pounded away at the obscenity of World War I. All defended the rights of a free press.

Radical periodicals raised economic and political issues that resonate today amid overseas sweatshops and environmental pollution spawned by economic globalization. The global financial crash of 2008 resurrected scrutiny of unfettered capitalism, yet Fox News's fear-mongering about President Barack Obama's so-called socialist agenda revealed how the label's stigma endures.⁹ The Wisconsin governor's 2011 campaign to strip public unions of their collective-bargaining rights exactly a century after his state became the first to guarantee workers' compensation reveals the precarious status of hard-won labor rights.¹⁰ The term "terrorism" turns up in Progressive Era periodicals, another link to the United States's post-911 siege mentality. Legislation like Arizona's 2010 "Show Me Your Papers" law, SB 1070, evokes the "one hundred percent Americanism" that helped fuel hysterical repression of the foreign-born in the 1910s, just as coinage of super-patriot "freedom fries" in 2003 recalls the World War I appetite for "liberty cabbage" (German sauerkraut).¹¹ *Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer even derides environmentalism as "The New Socialism."¹² Radicals' obsession with the commercial press remains germane, when today's hegemonic global media conglomerates possess unprecedented power after an orgy of consolidation commenced in the 1980s.¹³ "By any known theory of political democracy," media critic Robert McChesney wrote in the socialist *Monthly Review* in the twentieth century's twilight, "this tightly-held media system, accountable only to Wall Street and Madison Avenue, is a poisonous proposition."¹⁴ At the same time, the digital revolution has empowered twenty-first-century social movements such as Occupy Wall Street to reinvigorate radical press traditions through online social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Now that technology has relegated the prewar radicals' rich print culture to the past, it is fitting to revisit its role in American history.

Revisiting the Prewar Radical Press

Black, White, and Red All Over seeks to illuminate functions the of social movement media produced by the three main strains of radicalism—socialism, anarchism, and the IWW's industrial unionism—between 1900 and 1917, when

the federal government suppressed virtually all radical periodicals. As the voice of a broad swathe of disaffected Americans, the radical press added an important dissident note to public discourse during a period of turbulent social change. The book follows the intellectual thread first cast by Nicholas Salvatore's *Citizen Debs*, his path-breaking biography of socialist leader Eugene Debs, by arguing that these subversive periodicals paradoxically were quintessentially American: individualist, independent, social-minded, egalitarian, defiant, and celebratory of freedom. Their egalitarianism echoed the Jeffersonian democratic ideal. Even their call for revolution resounded from the roots of the American experience. Like *Common Sense* author Tom Paine, radical editors on the cusp of the twentieth century also were essentially pamphleteers. Even the radical press's advocacy role resembles that of the 1790s' partisan press, when newspapers in the infant United States served as vituperative mouthpieces for conservative Whigs and radical Jeffersonians who funded them as they pounded out in their calumnious pages a course for practicing democracy.¹⁵

The periodicals chosen for discussion here meet historian Leon Baritz's criteria for distinguishing radical political thought as "a commitment to, and advocacy of, transferring cultural, political, and economic power to the mass of powerless people."¹⁶ The Marxist-influenced political radicals discussed here rejected reform as mere palliative. Their diverse journals shared a unifying belief in advocating the abolition of capitalism. That revolutionary demand distinguished them from the reform journals that proliferated in the Progressive Era—from approximately the late 1890s to World War I—when civic reformers trusted that laws and education would eradicate social and economic problems. While previous related works have viewed elements of the radical press as individual, disconnected entities, this book takes a holistic approach to synthesize the role of hundreds of anarchist, socialist, and IWW newspapers and magazines.¹⁷ The topic matters because the radical press was a major instrument of the widespread radical movement, not just a recorder of it. As historian Joseph Conlin summed up in the pioneering two-volume collection of essays on 119 radical periodicals he edited in 1974, "The radical press is the chief source for understanding the radical experience in America."¹⁸ Their publications often were more important than the organizations and their activities themselves. Frequently they are the only records for many organizations whose records were destroyed by the federal government.

Although Conlin exaggerates the "excellent" quality of radical journalism before 1919, he correctly avers the early radical press is an important and neglected genre of American journalism history: "The thought, dreams, and

activities of the radicals are recorded there, and to a great extent, only there.”¹⁹ Other books that parse the many strands of prewar American radicalism mention their periodicals only in passing. *Black, White, and Red All Over* seeks to reclaim the radical press’s central role in a social movement that stirred millions of Americans in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Five Functions of the Prewar Radical Press

By focusing on the press as an integral part of prewar radicalism, this book highlights five of its critical functions: First, radical journals provided a sense of community and identity for a farflung, diverse network of Americans disturbed by the profound inegalitarianism that ballooned with corporate capitalism. To borrow Benedict Anderson’s phrase, as a group the journals created and sustained an “imagined community” of distant readers.²⁰ Second, they were the era’s prime source of information about meetings, labor actions, lectures, party politics, and social events of the radical social movement groups. Third, they educated readers about their creeds and radicalized hundreds of thousands of them. Fourth, they provided a voice for a significant segment of Americans largely absent from mainstream periodicals who offered pertinent critiques of the corporatization of the United States. Finally, they created a radical culture that both energized and emotionally sustained the social movement’s battered believers.

This radical press was part of news media collectively known as the dissident press, advocacy press, or alternative media, which scholar Chris Atton defines as media “produced outside the forces of market economics or the state.” They are “crucially about offering the means of democratic communication to people who are normally excluded from media production.”²¹ They provide voice to social movements, grassroots entities of large numbers of people organized to promote or resist a program in defiance of cultural norms.²² Social movement media promote collective action instead of products. Sociologist William Gamson deems social movement media the “central battleground” on which social movements define themselves and their issues as they challenge dominant political and cultural structures.²³ Social movement media throughout U.S. history have played key roles in reenvisioning society. They advocated once-heretical ideas long before the popular press signed on: the abolition press called for ending slavery, the labor press for free public education, the suffrage press for votes for women.²⁴

Framing theory and social movement theory can help illuminate functions of the radical press.²⁵ Within the context of social movements, framing is a seminal part of the “negotiation over meaning” that Gamson and Gadi Wolfsfeld say occurs between social movement organizations and dominant mass media.²⁶ Word choices, headline sizes, rhetorical devices, positioning of articles, selection of articles published or sources quoted—or not—and imagery all play roles in framing events and issues. Contesting the mainstream media’s negative frames of anarchists, socialists, and the IWW was a vital function of the radical press. Headlining an essay “Thomas Jefferson’s Anarchism,” for example, was part of *Mother Earth*’s attempt to reframe the media stereotype of anarchists as crazy, foreign bomb throwers into paragons of American republicanism.²⁷ In an era when government granted capitalists unlimited power to control labor—power that radical historian Michael Cohen claims made American labor history “the bloodiest of any western industrialized nation”—radical press frames performed what media historian John Downing describes as the radical media mission “to disrupt the silence, to counter the lies, to provide the truth.”²⁸ He asserts their dissident views make radical media “the chief standard bearers of a democratic communication structure.”²⁹

Mainstream media tend to “suppress deviations from the prevailing political and social orthodoxies of their time and place rather than to support the right to dissent,” in the view of First Amendment scholar John Lofton.³⁰ Social movements need their own journalistic voice to counter this hostility. The “mass media often portray dissidents who engage in contentious politics as ridiculous, bizarre, dangerous, or otherwise out-of-step” with mainstream American values, according to political scientist Jules Boykoff.³¹ The “propaganda model” first described by Noam Chomsky and Edwin Herman in 1988 argues that mainstream media give little or no coverage of dissenters, while governments and big business gain easy access to the public to convey messages supporting hegemonic political and economic powers. They claim the system is so ingrained that “media news people, frequently operating with complete integrity and goodwill, are able to convince themselves that they choose and interpret the new ‘objectively.’”³² Cultural theorist Stuart Hall similarly charged that mainstream media ostracize politically deviant social movements to help preserve the dominant social order.³³ Journalism historian Mitchell Stephens acknowledges the media’s “basic pro-authoritarian role.”³⁴ Sociologist Herbert Schiller claims “control of mass media and the general information system has become a key element either in maintaining or changing the status quo. How the media treat or

ignore a problem constitutes a critical exercise in power.”³⁵ Countering mainstream media hegemony that legitimized the skewed capitalist-controlled social order was a key part of the radical press’s voice function.³⁶ The radical press did not speak in a single voice, however, which ultimately worked against the radical agenda.

A Widely Diverse Radical Press

Radical journalists agreed everyone would thrive in a cooperative commonwealth but disagreed on how to achieve the social revolution. The journals of moderate, or yellow, socialists such as the dailies the *New York Call* and *Milwaukee Leader* devoted many column inches to electoral politics, believing the ballot would gradually deliver socialism. Militant, or red, socialists, who dismissed politics in favor of the collective industrial power of workers, more likely read the monthly *International Socialist Review* based in Chicago. The folksy socialist weekly *Appeal to Reason* in Kansas advocated both political and labor activism, which partially accounted for its phenomenal popularity. *Industrial Worker* and *Solidarity* and smaller IWW organs rejected politics and disdained most socialists as clueless poseurs who never performed physical labor. The voice of migrant and unskilled labor, IWW journals spoke for industrial unionism, a global system in which worker collectives would manage society as “One Big Union.” The IWW “Wobblies” also tossed violent rhetoric as if it were a Molotov cocktail, a strategy that belied their nonviolent ideal of solidarity. The anarchist movement, never fully recovered from the Haymarket bombing, turned to a handful of periodicals that rejected all hierarchical social institutions, including not only capitalism but also government and organized religion.

The most influential anarchist journal in the 1910s was *Mother Earth*, published in New York by Emma Goldman, who envisioned a revolution in relations between the sexes. So did the bohemian *Masses*, a satirical socialist soufflé of art and radical politics. In addition to those relatively well known periodicals, hundreds of smaller radical journals that rolled off presses attested to the scope of dissatisfaction with the new economic order in every pocket of America: the *Rebel* in Hallettsville, Texas; *Discontent* in Home, Washington; *Liberty* in Boston; *El Rebelde* in Phoenix; *Scott County Kicker* in Benton, Missouri; the *New Age* in Buffalo; *California Social-Democrat* in Los Angeles; *Labor Star* in Huntington, West Virginia; and *People’s Friend* in Rogers,

Arkansas. *Progressive Woman* gave socialist women a voice, and in November 1917 the *Messenger* became a bold new champion of African American socialism.

With the exception of less than a handful of socialist-inclined blackpress periodicals such as the *Messenger*, however, the study does not extend to the extensive alternative press that pioneered social reforms deemed radical by most Americans, such as votes for women or civil rights for African Americans. The book does not look at the suffrage press, trade-union newspapers, or the vast majority of the black press, because those periodicals sought to reform rather than overthrow the economic and political system. With very few exceptions, their publishers wanted to sit at the capitalists' table, not to upend it. While the text acknowledges the significant role of the large radical foreign-language press in U.S. radicalism, it is beyond its scope to explore their role in detail. The broader labor press with which the radical press overlapped is another story explored by other scholars. Neither does this study attempt a detailed analysis of the myriad intricate, shifting, and multilayered variations of radical political ideologies and their theoretical foundations. Other scholars have filled countless pages on the topic. This book focuses solely on the prewar radical press's overlooked role as a vital tool for voicing radical social movement views ignored, ridiculed, or demonized by the mainstream press.³⁷ Radical editors even risked death, as Parsons's case illustrates.

Haymarket and the Anarchists

On May 1, 1886, Parsons; his wife, Lucy; and their two children led eighty thousand people down Chicago's Michigan Avenue as part of a nationwide general strike for an eight-hour workday. The parade marked a peaceful interlude in a year rocked by unprecedented labor strife over wages, working conditions, unionization, and hours. The eight-hour workday held enormous symbolic significance as well as practical ramifications for workers pushed to labor up to twelve hours for six or even seven days a week since the advent of gas lighting in antebellum America. The shorter workday allowed laborers to live as humans rather than like animals under harness. Parsons had argued passionately for the eight-hour day in both the *Alarm* and on the podium at monster labor rallies. Two days after the peaceful May Day parade, however, police killed two workers when they fired on strikers at the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company. *Arbeiter-Zeitung* editor Spies and others swiftly pulled together a

peaceful protest at Haymarket Square on May 4. Parsons spoke but left before police showed up, after most of the crowd had dispersed. Someone threw a bomb, and police started firing. Eight officers and at least two workers died, mostly from police fire. Hundreds more lay injured.

Parsons was among eight anarchists convicted of conspiracy, although no direct evidence linked any of them to the bomb.³⁸ The editors' words doomed these apostles of the anarchist "propaganda of the deed." Haymarket marked the first major test of the limits of freedom of expression instigated by radical rhetoric over the next three decades. Trial Exhibit Number 30, for example, was a two-year-old *Alarm* editorial excoriating the profits system. It concluded: "Nothing but an uprising of the people and a bursting open of all stores and storehouses to the free access of the public, and a free application of dynamite to every one who opposes, will relieve the world of this infernal nightmare of property and wages."³⁹ An 1885 booklet on how to make dynamite published in the *Alarm* added to the pile of evidence. Spies also editorialized in the May 4, 1886, *Arbeiter-Zeitung* that "one single dynamite bomb" would avenge the McCormick victims.⁴⁰

These diatribes made for shocking reading but grossly exaggerated the anarchist threat; most historians cite the trial and execution as a terrible travesty of justice.⁴¹ Haymarket substantiates Linda Cobb-Reilly's assertion that "most often the anarchists were suppressed and punished for what they *said* rather than what they *did*."⁴² Media demonized them. Scholar Nathaniel Hong's study of more than a hundred magazines found they used fear-mongering techniques to exaggerate the anarchist threat and increase public allegiance to snowballing corporate power. "The anarchist was the constructed devil of the American civic religion in the late nineteenth century," he concludes.⁴³ Haymarket historian Henry David observes that the tragedy "was consciously used by capital interests through a willing press" to suppress all radicals. Newspapers clamored for revenge and printed wild rumors.⁴⁴

Newspapers themselves were ballooning into a powerful corporate-controlled industry. By 1891, house-sized quadruple presses could churn out seventy-two thousand eight-page papers per hour, fat with advertisements for the new department stores that were speeding America's consumer culture and transforming journalism's subscription-based business model. Advertising could compromise journalistic integrity. San Francisco newspapers, for example, promised to keep mum about an outbreak of bubonic plague in 1901 to placate department stores worried about a sales drop.⁴⁵ Mass-circulation dailies like William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer's *New York*

World jostled for as many as a million readers a day. The media moguls' grip on news was as tight as John D. Rockefeller's on the oil trust. Even before World War I, Hearst had begun amassing a media conglomerate that by 1929 would include twenty-eight newspapers, several magazines, news syndication services, a radio station, and a film company. Publisher Hearst's high political profile—he twice served as a New York congressman and once ran for governor—illustrates the synergy between journalism and political ambition.

Activists First, Journalists Second

The many radical leaders who were editors likewise demonstrate the centrality of the press in social movements. They were activists first, journalists second. Ed Boyce, president of the Western Federation of Miners that officially endorsed socialism, founded the *Miner's Magazine* in January 1900 to prevent wealthy mine owners from reducing union members "to a state of abject slavery."⁴⁶ Editors were passionate—frequently polemical—in defense of the proletariat. Many were eloquent and inspiring public speakers who crisscrossed the nation, further evidence of the symbiotic relationship between social movements and their press.⁴⁷ They drove themselves hard. Socialist presidential candidate Eugene Debs, himself an editor, wrote: "The average Socialist editor works harder, longer and more conscientiously than any other person in the movement, and he does it under circumstances that would break the spirit and drive out in despair and disgust anyone not literally harnessed to the movement by chains of steel."⁴⁸ The radical press's impassioned activist approach diverged from the elusive ideal of journalistic objectivity that emerged as the model for mainstream news media as the 1900s progressed. Radical editors had no interest in posing as disinterested observers: Journalism merely was a means to convert the masses.

Helen Keller's explanation in the *Call* of how she became a socialist underscores the radical press's potential to convert: "By reading."⁴⁹ Historian James Green found that an overwhelming majority of southwestern socialists were converted by reading movement literature.⁵⁰ By 1900, radical periodicals comprised a significant segment of the U.S. labor press, which originated in 1829 and ranged from nonpolitical organs that reported solely on a single union's business to IWW's revolutionary journals.⁵¹ Radical journals also were part of the even broader working-class press that, according to historian Jon Bekken, offered a venue "where readers could debate political, economic, and cultural issues."⁵² They encouraged reader participation by seeking articles and

letters from readers on working conditions, in an early version of what has become today's Internet-fueled citizen journalism. Radical media drummed into readers that it was their responsibility for their periodicals to succeed by gathering subscriptions, hawking copies on the street, or donating money. They addressed readers as comrades, not consumers. Besides colorful rhetoric, virtually all journals shared in common chronic financial crisis, a conundrum for a medium that rejected capitalism. Publishers pioneered innovative funding strategies. Goldman lectured cross-country to finance *Mother Earth*. The *International Socialist Review* and the *Call* formed cooperative publishing societies. Many journals accepted advertising, and *Appeal to Reason* even marketed its own clothespins. Publishing radical periodicals was a labor of love for which their editors always could expect harassment from both their audience and authorities but never riches.

Radical publishers capitalized upon the communications revolution of technological and transportation advances that fueled astronomical newspaper and magazine growth in the late nineteenth century.⁵³ More than six thousand periodicals on almost every topic imaginable filled newsstands in 1905. Journalism historian Leonard Teel states that by 1900 hundreds of publications were "propagating socialist, radical, or anarchist views that were denied access to mainstream publications."⁵⁴ Walter Goldwater lists 321 radical periodicals in his partial bibliography of the radical press.⁵⁵ Nathan Fine claims socialists published at least six hundred periodicals in their prewar heyday, including several dailies.⁵⁶ Socialist journalist Robert Hunter estimated in 1908 that they reached a million people.⁵⁷ The IWW published seven sanctioned newspapers in 1910 in Spanish, Polish, French, and Japanese, although *Industrial Worker* served as its "main organ for shaping and disseminating its views," according to IWW historian Melvyn Dubofsky.⁵⁸ At least two dozen English-language anarchist periodicals appeared between 1880 and 1917.⁵⁹ All were central to the "social iconoclasm" that historian Christine Stansell observes made the Progressive Era quiver with the twentieth-century's potential for a more equitable social order.⁶⁰ According to historian Lauren Kessler, despite myriad factions, all radicals believed that "journalism was essential to the cause."⁶¹

Aside from propagandizing, radical newspapers aspired to classic journalism ideals: to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted; to provide a voice for the voiceless; to champion freedom of expression; to hold the powerful accountable to the people. Radical journals frequently upheld these ideals better than did hegemonic news media. For example, when in 1917 vigilantes rounded

up some eleven hundred striking copper miners in Bisbee, Arizona, crammed them at gunpoint into railroad cattle cars, and dumped them in the New Mexico desert, the *Los Angeles Times* urged other towns to adopt the method to rid themselves of agitators.⁶² It was left to radical press editors to protest the deportation's unconstitutionality.

Influence of the Immigrant Radical Press

The first editors to challenge American capitalism were foreign-born. The Forty-Eighters comprised a wave of German cultural avant-garde intellectuals fleeing failed revolutions in 1848, the year Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels published *The Communist Manifesto*. "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," the pair famously declared. Marxist "scientific socialism" envisioned a state-run economy emerging from armed revolution. Social equality could only occur when workers took over the means of production, they proclaimed. The Marxist-influenced Forty-Eighter refugees had been distinguished editors, authors, or lecturers who turned to journalism in New York and Chicago and smaller midwestern cities such as St. Louis and Cincinnati. Adolf Douai wrote American travel books for Germans, edited an abolitionist newspaper in Texas, and a German-language daily until his death in 1888. Dashing Russian nobleman Serge Schevitsch doubled as a journalist-agitator at the *New Yorker Volkszeitung*, which prized his talent to "translate international ideas into the adopted vernacular so that friendly Irish and American-born workers could understand them."⁶³ By the late nineteenth century, one thousand German American titles dominated the widespread foreign-language press.⁶⁴

German anarchist Johann Most ignited radical circles when he moved his polemical anarchist newspaper *Freiheit* to New York at the end of 1882. A tragic childhood left Most perpetually angry at authority, tempered by keen empathy for the underdog. Those qualities oiled by a mordant wit infused *Freiheit*, founded by the much-jailed agitator in London in 1879 at age thirty-three after authorities expelled him from Berlin. A slight, well-read man whose beard hid a maimed jaw that shamed him, onstage Most transformed into a fire-breathing oracle of class war. His editorial genius for popularizing revolutionary theory and his incendiary rhetoric soon made the German-language *Freiheit* the anarchist movement's most influential journal.⁶⁵ As author of the dynamite recipe Parsons published in the *Alarm*, Most confirmed mainstream media's

stereotypical bomb-throwing anarchist as a foreign menace.⁶⁶

Italian anarchist periodicals such as *L'Agitazione* and *L'Avvenire* played an important transnational role in Italian American anarchist thought in the late 1890s. Conversely, the American version of *La Questione Sociale*, published in Paterson, New Jersey, sustained the Italian anarchist movement after the government outlawed the periodical of the same name published by Errico Malatesta, a major influence among immigrant anarchists and Wobblies. *La Questione* was one of dozens of short-lived Italian-language anarchist journals.⁶⁷ Although anarchy dominated among radical Italians, at its peak the Italian Socialist Federation distributed fifty-six hundred copies of the weekly *Il Proletario*. The radical press, as the newspaper observed, was Italian American *sovversivo* (subversive) culture's most important radical institution: "The book and the newspaper are the most potent means to hasten the triumph of workers' rights." Aldino Felicani, editor of *La Questione* among other periodicals, recalled how it easy was to become a radical publisher: "We just announced that our paper would come out on such and such a date and that we needed money to publish it. That was sufficient to bring us enough money to publish the paper."⁶⁸ Quantity rather than longevity characterized the ethnic press, which between 1880 and 1920 numbered some 3,440 newspapers that served at least thirty nationalities.⁶⁹ An exception was the Yiddish-language *Forverts* (Jewish Daily Forward) founded April 22, 1897, in New York and edited by Lithuanian-born Abraham Cahan, who attempted to reconcile socialism with Judaism. Circulation of the *Forverts*, one of thirteen Yiddish socialist periodicals in 1902, topped two hundred thousand by 1915. It continues today as a bilingual weekly.⁷⁰

The foreign-language press drew upon its ethnic communities' institutions and resources for news, readers, and financial support.⁷¹ Although the radical foreign-language press began to dwindle in the 1900s, it remained an important repository of immigrant culture that connected readers to American radicalism.⁷² Immigrants looked to ethnic journals for news of socialist or anarchist picnics, concerts, and balls. The IWW published small newspapers in a half-dozen languages to reach its large immigrant audience. The newspapers enabled immigrants to participate in American radical movements by publishing news about local radical groups as well as Debs's speeches in their native languages.

A New Generation of American-Born Radical Editors

Alabama-born Albert Parsons represented a new homegrown generation of

radical editors. The *Alarm*, which he edited, was the anarchists' most important English-language periodical. By 1885, the American movement claimed some seven thousand followers in eighty groups representing several distinct strains of anarchist thought. Nearly a third of them clustered in Chicago, dominated by labor-oriented anarcho-syndicalism, which emphasized worker solidarity and direct action to abolish capitalism. Spies's German-language *Arbeiter-Zeitung* and its Saturday and Sunday editions, *Vorbote* and *Fackel*, led the Chicago anarcho-syndicalist press with their twenty-thousand circulation by the time the Haymarket bomb exploded.⁷³ The editors' execution so profoundly affected workers that November 11, 1887, became a consecrated anniversary.

Radical media nurtured the Haymarket hanging's public memory annually in poems, illustrations, plays, essays, elegies, and editorials.⁷⁴ Periodicals "repeatedly returned to Haymarket to understand the past and make meanings for the present," according to literary historian Shelley Streeby.⁷⁵ The martyrs' tale became a "redemptive narrative" for a generation of radicals, as historian Green observes.⁷⁶ Twenty years later, socialist Max Baginski wrote in *International Socialist Review* that the state mistakenly believed "the murdering of revolutionary individuals was identical with the annihilation of revolutionary motives and ideas."⁷⁷ *Mother Earth* editor Alexander Berkman asserted in 1909, "The passage of the years merely serves to accentuate the atrocity of the deed."⁷⁸ Berkman, Goldman, Jay Fox, William Haywood, Ricardo Flores Magón, Charles Edward Russell, and Lois Waisbrooker were among editors who traced their radicalization to Haymarket. "From the time I was twelve years old," recalled socialist muckraker George Shoaf, "I wanted to go to Chicago to avenge the death of Albert Parsons."⁷⁹

Two other nineteenth-century labor debacles loomed almost as large in radical memory and media. On July 6, 1892, months of strong-armed union busting at the Carnegie Steel plant in Homestead, Pennsylvania, culminated in a hail of bullets from Pinkerton National Detective Agency guards that killed seven strikers and three Pinkertons.⁸⁰ The murders burnished the thuggish Pinkertons' reputation as brutal foot soldiers—not detectives—in industrialists' private armies assembled to crush strikes.⁸¹ The financial Panic of 1893 that forced nationwide bank closures and compelled a host of Americans to abandon their "underwater" mortgaged homes—source of the Victorian fascination with the "haunted house"—instigated the other infamous fatal labor confrontation. In 1894, thirteen strikers died when the federal government unleashed the United States Army to stop the massive strike of the Pullman Palace Car Company, in

which the American Railway Union, the nation's first industry-wide union, boycotted all trains containing Pullman cars. Young union leader Debs spent six months in jail, mostly reading radical literature. He emerged from his cell a confirmed socialist.

The Populist Press

In the Great Plains and Southwest, the Knights of Labor dominated the American radical imagination in the 1880s, when seven hundred thousand workers joined the secret, quasi-religious society that called for cooperative ownership of mines and factories. The Knights' *Journal of United Labor* preached labor solidarity along with the Knights' idealistic but vague vision for economic reform. Leader Terence Powderly opposed strikes and political action, however, leaving his impassioned followers adrift.⁸²

Populism, a widespread agrarian revolt against capitalism that supplanted the Knights at the end of the decade, offered much more specific remedies. Populists called for government ownership of railroads, telephones, and telegraphs; the abolition of national banks; the right of labor to organize; the eight-hour day; and other moves for keeping commerce in the community and restoring individual autonomy. Their call for "free silver" essentially was a cry against the monopolistic muscle of eastern corporate interests that farmers charged were bleeding them dry.⁸³ Kansan farmers coined the term "robber barons" to describe the railroad tycoons who controlled their fate.⁸⁴ Populist People's Party presidential candidate James B. Weaver garnered more than 1 million votes in its 1892 national election debut. The new party elected three governors, two senators, and thirteen congressmen.⁸⁵

The Populists' leading paper—the *American Nonconformist*, published by Henry Vincent—boasted the loudest voice among more than a thousand tiny, struggling Populist weeklies. Many banded together in the National Reform Press Association, a "monument to the democratic intensity of the agrarian crusade," according to historian Lawrence Goodwyn. "They struggled against poverty in its most humiliating form, against ostracism and persecution and all uncharitableness." Vigilantes shot and killed the coeditor of the *Alliance Vindicator* in Texas, and arsonists set fire to the *Living Truth* shop in Greenville, Alabama. In 1895, *Nonconformist* editor Francis X. Matthews marveled at his colleagues' tenacity: "The quality, tone and contents of their papers steadily improved until today some of the most ably edited journals of the country are

found in their ranks.”⁸⁶

Populism’s anticorporate agenda particularly appealed to miners, a new class of industrial workers in Appalachia and the mountainous West. The 1896 election of Populist Davis H. Waite—editor of the pro-labor, antimonopoly *Aspen Union Era*—as Colorado governor underscored the symbiosis between journalism and politics.⁸⁷ In Georgia, Populist congressman Tom Watson served as editor and business manager of the Atlanta-based *People’s Party Paper* (1891–98). Populist ascendance was short-lived, however, as on the eve of the 1896 election the People’s Party merged with the Democrats. Although 80 percent of voters in Colorado and several other mountain states supported the Democratic and Populist Party presidential nominee William Jennings Bryan, his defeat by Republican William McKinley spelled the end of Populism. The loss also signaled farmers’ last bid as a major political force. Georgia’s fiery Watson failed miserably in two presidential bids on the Populist ticket, in 1904 and 1908, but retained state-wide influence through the 1910s as he turned his attacks to blacks, Jews, Catholics, and socialists in his anticapitalist, white-supremacist publications *Watson’s Magazine* (1905–6 and 1912–17) and the *Jeffersonian* magazine (1907–17).⁸⁸ Many other former Populists who despaired of the two-party system, however, turned to socialism.

The Influence of Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward*

A science fiction novel converted tens of thousands more to socialism. Edward Bellamy’s phenomenally popular *Looking Backward: 2000–1887* stirred millions with its rosy portrayal of a future socialist utopia in which all industry is nationalized. *Looking Backward*’s vision of the peaceful evolution of voluntary cooperative societies Americanized socialist thought because it diverged from the Marxist emphasis on class conflict.⁸⁹ Overnight, the novel fomented a new social movement, Nationalism, which briefly spawned a Los Angeles-based socialist journal, the *Weekly Nationalist* (1890–91). Nationalists promoted *Looking Backward*’s plan for social reorganization based on a government-run industrial army. Although some people feared the movement smacked of authoritarianism, Nationalists in fact were fairly tepid revolutionaries who championed the electoral process.⁹⁰ With Bellamy’s blessing, in 1890 Los Angeles Nationalists launched the first socialist candidate for Congress, dapper real-estate developer H. Gaylord Wilshire. A decade later, he would publish one of the early twentieth century’s most successful socialist magazines.⁹¹

Wilshire had much in common with another *Looking Backward* fan, midwestern real-estate speculator and newspaper publisher Julius A. Wayland. The Indiana native started in journalism as a child “roller boy” in a print shop for fifty cents a week. He worked his way up to apprentice, then typesetter. At nineteen, he bought the shop.⁹² Wayland fared well under the profits system but metamorphosed from a Republican to Populist to socialist in the 1880s while running his shop and profitably speculating in real estate in Pueblo, Colorado, ground zero of the West’s new corporate order. Along with his neighboring miners, farmers, and ranchers, Wayland felt himself a victim of the railroads’ “iron heel of extortion,” as he termed their freight monopoly. A Pueblo shoemaker accelerated Wayland’s radicalization when he handed him a pamphlet proposing public ownership of railroads. Wayland came back for more, including tracts by the likes of John Ruskin and Laurence Gronlund’s *The Cooperative Commonwealth in Its Outlines: An Exposition of Modern Socialism*. Wayland recalled, “I saw a new light and found what I never knew existed.”⁹³

Julius Wayland’s “One-Hoss Philosophy”

Wayland emulated Ruskin, a British artist and social thinker, who advocated replacing the dehumanizing wage system with cooperative communities in which meaningful work enriched members’ quality of life. As publisher of *Fors Clavigera: Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain*, Ruskin served as an important journalistic role model for Wayland. He threw himself into writing and speaking on socialism before it dawned on him that his journalistic background had primed him to deliver the socialist message to more people at less cost than any other method. Unlike the obtuse Ruskin, however, Wayland wrote in a down-home style that made socialism sound as American as chicken and biscuits. Wayland condensed these influences with his innate faith in American democratic ideals into a homespun “One-Hoss Philosophy” that made his *Appeal to Reason* exceptional among the 1890s’ simultaneously grave and sensationalist radical periodicals.



A caricature of Julius Wayland spinning some of his “One-Hoss Philosophy,” *Appeal to Reason*, September 12, 1903.

In July 1895, Wayland had just fled to Missouri from Ruskin, a cooperative colony he founded the previous year in the Tennessee boondocks. Wayland planned to fund his commune with profits from his first socialist newspaper, the Populist-influenced *Coming Nation* launched in 1893 in Greensburg, Indiana. *Coming Nation*’s profits never approached Wayland’s optimistic projections even though its circulation of sixty thousand made it the nation’s leading socialist periodical. He handed over *Coming Nation* to aggrieved Ruskinites who had sued for its ownership before he moved to Missouri. The entrepreneurial socialist felt so despondent that no less than legendary labor agitator Mary Harris “Mother” Jones had to cajole him into launching a new socialist periodical. Little did Wayland realize that the *Appeal to Reason* he indifferently unveiled on August 3, 1895, would rocket to a circulation above 750,000 at its peak in 1913, making it, according to biographer Elliott Shore, “the most successful institution of the socialist movement in the United States and the one national weekly newspaper that unified the movement from coast to coast.”⁹⁴

New York's Divisive Daniel De Leon

In the East, the *People*, official organ of the nation's first socialist political party, was as doctrinaire as Wayland's newspaper was plainspoken. The Socialistic Labor Party (SLP) had been an obscure, mostly German-speaking group in New York until Daniel De Leon began editing the weekly *People* in 1892. A Dutch West Indies native educated in Europe, who taught international law at what is now Columbia University, De Leon, like Wayward, found socialism in part through *Looking Backward*. Unlike the cajoling and often humorous One-Hoss Philosopher, De Leon wielded a poison pen against anyone who diverged from his strict Marxist views. The shabbily dressed, estranged aristocrat was virulently anti-union and dismissed Populism as a "middle class, reactionary movement."⁹⁵ A typical editorial in 1894 vilified the head of the United Mine Workers as "an ignorant man, an imbecile, as fit to be at the head of a large labor organization as a land lubber at the helm of a Cunarder."⁹⁶ De Leon has been called the single most divisive figure in radical history. When he died in 1914, he was eulogized as both a "destructionist" and "the most powerful individual in the American Socialist movement."⁹⁷

Total control over the party press was a basic tenet of De Leon's philosophy. He demanded that SLP locals shut down their own newspapers because they were based on immigrant communities instead of socialism. Attempts by the acrimonious "American Lenin" to take over the new Yiddish daily *Di Abendbat* in the mid-1890s inspired staffers to jump ship and found the *Jewish Daily Forward*. Besides smiting capitalists, De Leon wielded the *People* to bludgeon socialist critics and dictate SLP policy. De Leon nonetheless reenergized the SLP. His editorials were the first to match the intellectual rigor of the German American socialist editors. He quickly changed his party's official language to English, a major step toward Americanizing the movement. He also translated into English many of the works of Marx, Engels, and other socialist thinkers. Instead of ethnic news items about the community and homeland, he filled the *People* with Marxist theory and arguments for socialism. Historian Paul Buhle argues the SLP's strictly Marxist, theoretical publication held little relevance for American socialism: "It made Socialists into know-it-all fanatics rather than community members one step ahead of their neighbors; and it made them agents of an organization that separated itself from their struggles in order to proclaim the absolute truth they would have to follow for their salvation."⁹⁸

De Leon nonetheless maneuvered the somewhat unfocused SLP into supporting a system of socialist industrial unions in which workers managed

industry, similar to the IWW's vision. On July 1, 1900, the *Daily People* appeared as the first English-language socialist daily newspaper in America. De Leon viewed a daily party newspaper as a critical organizing tool. "No longer is it possible to pass in scornful silence the work of the ax wielder," he editorialized. "It must be recorded in some wise because the DAILY PEOPLE published it and the readers of the daily papers demand the news."⁹⁹

De Leon and Wayland inevitably clashed in a journalistic war that shaped twentieth-century American socialism. De Leon visited the *Appeal to Reason* in Kansas in summer 1896, when Wayland briefly supported the SLP, but the New York intellectual privately pronounced Wayland a hapless "Salvation Army sentimentalist."¹⁰⁰ Wayland soon renounced what he termed De Leon's "czar rule." Soon their presses rattled with attacks on each other as radicals scrambled to redefine themselves after the disappointing 1896 election. In 1898, Debs followers opposed to De Leon created the Social Democratic Party of America.¹⁰¹

Milwaukee Publisher/Politician Victor Berger

One founding member of the SDP was yet another influential radical journalist/politician who personified the shift from European to American-style socialism. Victor Berger had immigrated in 1878 with his parents from what is now Romania. By age twenty-one he had worked as both a teacher and editor in Milwaukee, where the large German population supported an active socialist movement. In January 1893, Berger became editor and publisher of the *Milwaukee Arbeiter-Zeitung*, which he renamed the *Wisconsin Vorwärts* (Forward). Despite publishing in German, he viewed the weekly newspaper as a tool "to adapt scientific socialism to the American situation," according to biographer Sally Miller.¹⁰² Berger stood at the conservative end of the radical spectrum, which believed enacting reforms through electoral politics gradually would cut a path toward the cooperative commonwealth. He was sure trade unionists could be persuaded to see the socialist light. Berger also believed newspaper ownership was requisite for political power. In 1901, Berger began publishing the SDP's official organ, the weekly *Social Democratic Herald*, in English. The *Herald* signaled the Americanization of the radical press in the new century. Its growth and political clout over the next decade paralleled socialism's rise as a mass movement, just as the tragic end to editor Berger's contentious career as the nation's first socialist congressman would parallel the movement's

demise during World War I.

Berger played a key role in the creation of the Socialist Party of America, the last in the alphabet soup of American socialist organizations. In 1899, he lent his editorial heft, along with that of the *Appeal's* Wayland, to SLP dissidents who sought to push De Leon out of his editorial perch on the *People*. Previously in the *Appeal*, Wayland attacked De Leon for treating SLP members like “dumb driven cattle, to be deprived of freedom to think or speak.”¹⁰³ Via the *People*, De Leon ordered a boycott of the *Appeal* and expelled SLP locals that violated the ban—thus proving Wayland’s point. Each side laid claim to being the genuine SLP, and each issued its version of the *People* until a court ruled the newspaper belonged to De Leon’s SLP. Meanwhile, in 1900 Debs made his first presidential bid, under the SDP banner. He won 87,945 votes (0.63 percent of the total). It was less than half the Prohibition Party’s take but nearly 30,000 more votes than the faded Populists’ 50,989 tally and more than double the SLP’s 40,943 votes. As its miniscule numbers indicated, the fledgling socialist movement could ill afford factionalism.

Socialists’ Aversion to a Party Press

Anti-De Leon SLP dissidents and the SDP attempted to resolve the divide in a “unity convention” in Indianapolis from July 29 to August 1, 1901, in which they merged into the Socialist Party of America.¹⁰⁴ De Leon did not attend, yet his legacy exerted a profound influence on socialist journalism. The First Amendment and the press figured at the heart of the split between De Leon’s SLP and Debs’s SDP, highlighting how democratic American values clashed with inflexible European socialism. The legal wrangling over the *People* reinforced De Leon’s belief in a party-owned press. “A privately owned press is like a man’s coat,” he wrote in 1909. “The coat may cover an S.L.P. man today, and tomorrow an anti-S.L.P. man. There is no safety except in Party ownership.”¹⁰⁵

The new Socialist Party consciously forged a press policy that was the polar opposite of De Leon’s top-down approach to journalism; it pointedly declined to publish its own organ. The National Executive Committee approved a constitutional amendment that read, “This committee shall neither publish nor designate any official organ.”¹⁰⁶ Those ten words held huge ramifications for U.S. socialism. The policy spawned an animated media landscape in which hundreds of socialist periodicals challenged American political and economic

hegemony. Unfortunately, radical newspapers filled almost as much space challenging each other. Their press was an echo chamber of the fractious infighting that sometimes made radicals their own worst enemies. Anarchist *Mother Earth* contributor William Owen once wrote how “disillusioned” the labor press left him. Any reader, he lamented, “will find these paid editors, this official hierarchy, turning out a literature that is picayunnishness itself; that never rises higher than organization squabbles, correspondence about the label, and the most trifling irrelevancies.”¹⁰⁷

Eternal name-calling was just one radical press shortcoming. Bombastic and dogmatic, radical journalism also offers lessons in the uses and limits of verbal and visual rhetoric by a social movement. Radicals’ millions of words offered no blueprint for operating a cooperative commonwealth, a goal more dubious because of their ceaseless squabbling. As the *New York Times* observed of socialism in 1903, “There is a great deal of generalization without definiteness.”¹⁰⁸ Like the Progressives, radicals believed that to make moral choices, people only needed to be educated. Their faith in the printed word seems quaint today. Doctrinaire screeds and dogma made for dull reading, and much news coverage never rose above propaganda. Racist cartoons negated calls for racial equality, while incongruously conventional views of women occasionally contradicted the journals’ calls for revolution. Even editors’ tendencies to emphasize workers’ victimization could backfire on a social movement’s need to forge an empowering collective identity. Radical periodicals could be as sensational, vitriolic, biased, and error-ridden as their nemeses in what they called the capitalist press. Polemics often dominated their pages. Sometimes radical journalists knowingly lied to readers. Calls for armed revolt by the most militant publications alienated the majority of Americans who believed in change through established institutions. Ultimately, the prewar radical press failed in its mission to persuade Americans to scrap capitalism for a cooperative commonwealth. Even radical journalist Joseph Cohen once wrote of the socialist press, “Its shortcomings are so glaring as often enough, to be one of its most striking features.”¹⁰⁹

Socialism and Social Justice

Despite its shortcomings, the radical press voiced the concerns of many Americans. “In the years before World War I,” asserts historian Jackson Lears, “Socialism was an important part of American public discourse, a complement

and a goad to reformist impulses.”¹¹⁰ The vision of the cooperative commonwealth embodied an egalitarian American ethic of social justice as much as it did an economic system. A number of American radical journalists, especially those of modernist *Masses* and *Seven Arts* in the 1910s, ignored the Europeans’ doctrinaire scientific socialism. “What in hell could Karl Marx know about the U.S. It was the City proletariat that Marx knew about,” wrote Frank O’Hare, who ran the socialist *National Rip-Saw* in St. Louis. “He was of positively no use to us at all, in the American Socialist movement, which was so largely rural.”¹¹¹ Many socialists before World War I simply desired social justice rather than actual revolution.¹¹² Hundreds of thousands of moderate liberals voted socialist because they favored reform or protested corrupt politics.¹¹³ “It was an escape-valve for many discontented Americans, offering through the political process an alternative to the establishment,” writes historian G. Gregory Kiser.¹¹⁴ Yet, many angry Americans did not view radicalism as a mere escape valve. The existence of hundreds of radical periodicals in every corner of the country undeniably revealed widespread rage against the rising corporate state whose power seemed to violate American ideals of fair play, merit, and individual agency. Those of the most militant socialists as well as the antiauthoritarian anarchists and truculent IWW called for no less than revolution.

Like much of the radicalism in American history, the role of the prewar radical press has been largely lost or forgotten. One reason the prewar radical press has largely disappeared from memory is that the federal government went to such drastic lengths to quash it. Yet the radical press endured. Rather than an aberration, the radical press has been a constant presence on the American media landscape, most recently in 2011, as part of the Occupy Movement. Never, however, was the American radical press as vital as it was between 1900 and 1917. It played a larger role in American culture than even the vibrant underground press of the 1960s, which has received far more historical attention.¹¹⁵ In the earlier twentieth century, more radical periodicals circulated than in the 1960s, among a smaller population, without any competition from broadcast media.

Black, White, and Red All Over begins its examination of the dynamic prewar radical press in [chapter 1](#) by exploring the socialist periodicals that surfaced in the agrarian heartland, ranging from folksy *Appeal to Reason* to cerebral *International Socialist Review*. [Chapter 2](#) views socialists’ attempts to provide alternatives to urban daily newspapers through the prism of the *Daily Call*. [Chapter 3](#) explores the crusades and sensationalism employed by the radical press led by the *Appeal* in its mission to champion workers. [Chapter 4](#)

illuminates the pitfalls of the *Appeal*'s personal, partisan journalism and the resulting divisive Socialist Party debates on a party press. [Chapter 5](#) probes how the prolific IWW's unskilled workers wielded journalism as a form of direct action, its much-debated and misunderstood method of combating capitalism. [Chapter 6](#) analyzes the role periodicals played in the anarchists' pioneering battles for a free press, free speech, and free love. [Chapter 7](#) considers how Lyrical Left journals such as *Wilshire's* and the *Masses* expanded the radical agenda beyond economics to encompass the arts and literature. [Chapter 8](#) surveys socialism in the black press and scrutinizes how other radical periodicals' treatment of race revealed the gap between radical dreams and social reality. [Chapter 9](#) explores radical journals' lead role in addressing key questions about women's role in society even as their publishers' privileging of class over gender made it almost impossible to combat sex discrimination. [Chapter 10](#) details the federal government's campaign to shut down the radical press during World War I. The conclusion summarizes the legacy of the prewar radical press and traces its evolution into the twenty-first century's global anticapitalist social movement media. A final analysis traces parallels between the Occupy movement's instantaneous social media and the radical print culture whose traditions they follow. Those parallels show that radical media are a persistent piece of American political culture, as is the social inequity they denounce. Despite its signature online technology, Occupy's mission statement could have been pecked out on a radical editor's manual typewriter after the financial Panic of 1893: "#ows is fighting back against the corrosive power of major banks and multinational corporations over the democratic process, and the role of Wall Street in creating an economic collapse that has caused the greatest recession in generations."¹¹⁶

CHAPTER ONE

SOCIALISTS

NATIONAL PERIODICALS IN THE HEARTLAND

Like feeding melting butter on the end of a hot awl to an infuriated wildcat.

OSCAR AMERINGER, *If You Don't Weaken*

■ The moment Mother Jones stepped off the train and onto the station platform at Mt. Carbon, West Virginia, as she recalled, the “corporate dogs set up a howl.” The company town represented a new, industrial form of feudalism, erected by Tianawha Coal and Coke Company to house workers. Housing usually was substandard and company store goods overpriced. Officials kept a close eye on residents. Mt. Carbon was one stop among hundreds for the indomitable white-haired, bespectacled sexagenarian during decades of stumping and loudly supporting strikers in mining towns. Tianawha authorities warned Jones she courted arrest if she spoke publicly. She recalled, “I told him that the soil of Virginia had been stained with the blood of the men who marched with Washington and Lafayette to found a government where the right of free speech should always exist.”¹

The company ordered the local hotel not to feed or house Jones. It evicted the mining family that offered her a night's lodging and fired the husband. “Every rain storm pours through the roof of the corporation shacks and wets the miner and his family,” Jones reported. “They must enter the mine early every morning and work from ten to twelve hours a day amid the poisonous gases. As I look around and see the condition of these miners who produce the wealth of the nation, and the injustice practiced on these helpless people, I tremble for the future of a nation whose legislation legalizes such infamy.”²

■ ■ ■

Mother Jones' vivid testimony in the *International Socialist Review (ISR)* departed from the intellectual debates that dominated the early years of the dense monthly launched in Chicago in 1900 by Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, but by the end of the decade readers came to expect such tough reporting from the journal. By then the *Review* and the *Appeal to Reason* had emerged as the most significant nationally circulated socialist periodicals. By 1913, the Kansas-based weekly *Appeal's* circulation rocketed to a stratospheric 760,000, making Julius A. Wayland's newspaper *Gulliver* to the Lilliputian *ISR's* 60,000 subscribers.³ But no socialist publishing venture made as much of an impact on American public discourse by publishing so much radical literature as did Kerr's. This chapter will examine Kerr and Wayland's considerable contributions to radical print culture. It will compare how the *ISR* and the *Appeal* adapted business and journalism strategies to perform social-movement media functions. Beyond those leading journals, the chapter surveys some of the hundreds of other socialist periodicals that ranged from a children's magazine to union bulletins. Labor and politics emerge as predictably persistent topics, but more surprising themes such as religion, machines, and poetry thread through pages of the socialist press. First, a look at the similarities between *ISR* and the *Appeal* helps explain their leading role in nurturing socialist culture.

Commonalities between the *International Socialist Review* and the *Appeal to Reason*

Although *ISR* initially was as cerebral as the *Appeal* was folksy, the two periodicals had much in common. Their publishers did more than anyone to educate Americans about socialism.⁴ Wayland's weekly claimed five thousand *Appeal* study clubs in 1906 that instructed readers in the social movement.⁵ Biographer Allen Ruff asserts Kerr's successful business plan and commitment to making radical literature affordable and accessible made Kerr's company "the foremost socialist publisher of the era."⁶ Both the *Appeal* and *ISR* exerted much influence in Socialist Party politics, so much so that party leaders and socialist publishers eventually challenged their dominance of radical print culture.⁷ Crucially, both were independent periodicals with strong publishers and editors who did not have to answer to a party local or meddling press committee, as did many of their peers. Both publishers were products of the agrarian heartland yet succeeded in engaging readers in the urban East and mountainous West. Wayland and Kerr both experimented creatively with alternative business models

to finance their anticapitalist ventures but resorted nonetheless to advertising. Their investigative reporting on labor issues and their activist journalism influenced radical politics in intended and unintended ways.



Untitled, *Appeal to Reason*, October 31, 1903.

The stature of the two journals also was partially the result of adding labor's two most celebrated leaders to their mastheads. Eugene Debs penned editorials for the *Appeal* and mining organizer William "Big Bill" Haywood for the *ISR*. Another key to the two journals' success was their prairie-bred publishers' embrace of farmers as part of the proletariat, a departure from the European Marxists. Both publishers viewed advocacy journalism as the most effective way to promote socialism and counter hegemonic media. *ISR*, for example, once claimed the capitalist press "has held the workers in mental servitude for years, it has blinded us to our own interests."⁸ Conversely, in 1911 prominent radical writer Joseph Cohen pronounced that the socialist press's "opportunities for doing greater good are almost endless."⁹ Kerr and Wayland both emphasized education as a prime function of the socialist press.

Kerr cast a broader and more intellectual net than the provincial Wayland. In its early years, *ISR* was a text-heavy sixty-four pages, plump with intellectually challenging essays and book reviews that kept its promise to report on

international socialism, explain socialist theory, and relate socialism to American life.¹⁰ Ruff asserts the *Review* “conveys more information about the particular social and political cause for which it spoke than any other contemporary record.”¹¹ It functioned as the voice of the movement’s theorists rather than of its rank and file, however, especially before 1908.

Kerr, yet another radical publisher inspired by *Looking Backward*, was the son of Scottish-born abolitionists who worked with African Americans in Georgia. Kerr discovered Marxism during studies with radical economist Richard Ely at the University of Wisconsin. He parlayed knowledge gained while working at a Unitarian publishing house after college into launching his own company in 1886.¹² Months after marrying May Walden in 1892, the thirty-two-year-old publisher incorporated the Kerr company as a cooperative venture.¹³ When the Kerrs embraced socialism in the late 1890s, their lakeside Chicago suburban home became the nucleus of a circle of idealistic young socialists that included *ISR* cofounder and editor Algernon “Algie” Simons and his wife, May Wood Simons, who lived with the Kerrs for several months. May Kerr recalled how their enthusiasm for socialism “nearly set the house afire.”¹⁴

She also recalled her husband as a “shrewd bargainer.”¹⁵ The company translated and published innumerable European Marxist works, including the first English versions of the second and third volumes of Marx’s *Das Capital*. Its ambitious publishing program to make radical literature affordable and accessible introduced tens of thousands of Americans to a wide range of European radical thinkers, including the Brits William Morris and Robert Blatchford, Marx’s fellow Germans Friedrich Engels and Karl Kautsky, and Frenchman Paul Lafargue. Publication of these works made Kerr the main conduit of the transnationalism that colored American radical print culture.¹⁶

Kerr also Americanized socialism with its five-cent Pocket Library of Socialism series. Authors of the sixty pamphlets published in the company’s first decade-included Jack London, Clarence Darrow, and Debs.¹⁷ While the *Appeal to Reason* also published classic European Marxist works as well as those by Americans stretching back to Tom Paine, Wayland lacked Kerr’s enthusiasm for theory. In 1909, Kerr bought all plates and copyrights of the *Appeal to Reason* Publishing Company’s books.¹⁸ He also acquired copyrights from Debs and the Wilshire Book Company, the publishing arm of H. Gaylord Wilshire’s popular eponymous socialist magazine. Kerr’s expansive publishing ventures not only served as a repository and stimulus of socialist culture but also gave the *ISR* leverage against the circulation-colossus *Appeal*. The *ISR*’s debut in July 1900

further enhanced Chicago's reputation as the hub of American radicalism.¹⁹ Because of its publisher's broad swathe, no radical periodical performed the education function better than *ISR*.

The Launch of *International Socialist Review* under Editor Algie Simons

Kerr's financing of the new monthly shows how socialist publishers adapted capitalist methods to fund their anticapitalist journals. Kerr initially sold two hundred \$10 shares in *ISR*; Shareholders received no dividends but could buy books at cost.²⁰ Kerr began to limit individuals to single shares and to allow them to buy these in \$1 installments, a unique approach that dispersed control of the stock and enabled low-income workers to participate.²¹ By April 1901, some thirty-five hundred people subscribed to *ISR* at \$1 a year, and an equal number bought it at newsstands for a dime. In a burst of corporate synergy, the magazine advertised Kerr books and pamphlets on its back cover and on inside pages. *ISR* also advertised other radical journals, which reciprocated.²² The company wobbled into the black by the end of 1903, although it continued to rely on personal loans and donations.

ISR followed the company model by publishing essays by every notable European socialist intellectual. Kerr and editor Simons also infused the publication with a distinctive American flavor. A Wisconsin farm boy who preferred reading, Simons escaped to the University of Wisconsin when a local lawyer gave him \$100 to enroll. A product of the agrarian "hotbed of Populism," whose family lost its farm in the Panic of 1893, Simons was receptive to socialism.²³ Like Kerr, he read Marx in Ely's class, and assisted him in the writing of *Socialism and Social Reform*. Simons also acquired some journalism chops by working as a stringer for the *Madison Democrat* and *Chicago Record*. His social conscience steered him to social work in Chicago in 1895, but fact-finding missions in the squalid stockyards' "Packingtown" neighborhood convinced him only of charity's futility. He joined the Socialist Labor Party and in spring 1899 began editing the SLP local's *Worker's Call*—which Kerr printed. Simons also stood among Socialist Party of America founders in Indianapolis. After the tragic death of the Simonses' eighteen-month-old son, friends pooled funds to give the couple a respite in Europe, where visits with numerous socialist thinkers strengthened the Kerr firm's transnational bonds. Once back in Chicago, Simons immersed himself in editing *ISR*.

Simons shared an *ISR* column with German-born socialist writer Ernest Untermann, titled “Socialism Abroad.” Readers found countless more international articles covering socialists from France to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, usually culled from European socialist magazines.²⁴ Max Hayes compiled briefs in his “The World of Labor.” Essays scrutinized democracy and parsed socialism.²⁵ *ISR*’s political contributors exploded any notion that radicalism spoke with a single voice. Simons raked anarchists, for example, in the wake of President William McKinley’s assassination by a self-described anarchist. Socialists use the ballot to end capitalism, he wrote, while useless anarchist violence enflames the public against all who advocate change. “Thus it comes about that over and over again the violent deeds of anarchists have been used as an excuse for attacking the only real enemy of anarchy—socialism.”²⁶

Simons Provides Farmers a Socialist Voice

Editor Simons was most passionate when arguing for the inclusion of American farmers in the proletariat. He understood far better than urban, eastern socialists that the Marxist dichotomy of industrial workers versus capitalists ignored the United States’ agrarian heritage. In 1905, he reprinted in *ISR* a groundbreaking essay, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” influenced by another of his professors, Frederick Jackson Turner, whose seminal argument was that western agriculture made American society unique.²⁷ Simons’s 1902 *The American Farmer* was the first book to analyze agriculture through a Marxist lens, and his was the preeminent radical voice on the issue. In *ISR*, Simons challenged the Marxist categorization of farm smallholders as petty bourgeoisie. Farmers not only worked with their hands but also were at the mercy of market vicissitudes and bank lenders, Simons explained, making them perfect recruits to rise against capitalism.²⁸ The prolific Simons published in both socialist journals such as *Wilshire’s* and non-socialist magazines such as the *Independent*. He also cofounded *Comrade* magazine, wrote books, and served on the SP’s national executive committee from 1906 to 1910.

The *Appeal*, which also claimed farmers as comrades, serialized Simons’s “American History for the Workers” as a text for its study clubs.²⁹ The *Appeal* painted a rosy picture of farming under socialism, in which the state would own farms worked by a “public agricultural service” that earned equal pay according to hours clocked—never more than four hours a day. “Those who would not work could not eat,” it explained. “To-day those who work least, enjoy all the

advantages of progress.”³⁰ Popular socialist journalist Kate Richards O’Hare, who grew up on a farm, also wrote of large collectives as farmers’ salvation, for the urban-oriented socialist monthly *Wilshire’s*.³¹ Meanwhile, *ISR* advised farmers to voluntarily share tractors and other machines—“Unless they want to lose their land to corporations and see their kids become wage slaves.”³²

Ambivalence toward the Machine Age

Socialist journals offer insights into American workers’ ambivalence toward machines that were easing human toil but stealing jobs. A major incitement of the 1892 Homestead strikes stemmed from the stream of skilled jobs lost to machines. State-of-the-art improvements helped Carnegie Steel president Henry Clay Frick demolish the union even as he eliminated an entire shift by cutting wages and stretching the remaining two shifts’ workdays to twelve hours.³³ “The World of Labor” frequently discussed new inventions displacing workers, such as portrait artists reduced to retouching machine-made portraits.³⁴ Another article rued the toll that technology exacted on the machinists union: “Its craft life is flickering like a wind-blown candle.”³⁵ A 1915 article ticked off astounding numbers about Henry Ford’s revolutionary automobile assembly line: The multiple spindle drill blasted seventy-two holes at once, enabling its two operators to drill six times faster—a 3,600 percent time gain.³⁶

Yet many correspondents welcomed machines they believed could lift workers out of serfdom—if owned by workers. “Machinery is the servant of all,” Scott Nearing declared in *ISR*.³⁷ The journal’s Mary Marcy expressed no nostalgia for the backbreaking labor of the romanticized “oldtime Woman’s Sphere.” She wrote in 1913, “No intelligent human being wants to return to candles or home dyeing and weaving; to the splitting and sawing of wood for the daily breakfast; to home butchering, lard rendering, candle-making that made the old ‘free days’ continuous arduous toil from three or four in the morning till late at night three hundred and sixty-five days in a year.”³⁸ O’Hare weighed in that machines—under socialism—could end child labor.³⁹ *Wilshire’s* enthused that street-sweeping machines exemplified how labor-saving machinery could eliminate the dirty work of manual labor. Its publisher deduced from such inventions that under socialism “there will be little or no unpleasant work to be done by the individual, and certainly no menial work.”⁴⁰ Indiana ditch diggers who sent *ISR* a photo of a steam shovel that cut a third of their work force

brightly predicted that in the cooperative commonwealth, “Nobody will have to work more than two or three hours a day and all the good things of life will be ours to enjoy.”⁴¹ The *Appeal*’s Wayland shared the belief that machines, large-scale farming, and even trusts were integral to the social revolution. He wrote, “The hurt is not because of the great aggregations of capital—but the private ownership of it.”⁴²

***International Socialist Review* Becomes More Militant under New Editors**

As corporations unleashed more violence against workers, Kerr grew more militant, which widened a philosophical rift with *ISR* editor Simons. He leaned toward the party’s yellow socialists, moderate gradualists that advocated using the ballot to effect a gradual move to socialism. Kerr increasingly veered toward the militant red socialists. Leftists like him championed the militant Industrial Workers of the World’s call for “direct action”—a troublesome phrase that could be interpreted as anything from a strike to dynamite—instead of the vote. 1908 election results lent some credence to their lack of faith in politics, as the 420,852 votes cast for Debs for president actually dropped a smidgen from the 3 percent of the popular vote he received in 1904. Kerr also desired an edgier editorial product. “The *Review* was too often stolid and leaden” under Simons, claims his biographer Robert Huston.⁴³ Kerr also was irked that Simons’s other work distracted him from his *ISR* editorial duties. When Kerr fired Simons and took over as *ISR* editor in 1908, Kerr determined to enliven the journal and lure subscribers from the fire-breathing *Appeal*.⁴⁴

He handed many of *ISR*’s editorial responsibilities over to Leslie and Mary Marcy. Short and square-jawed Mary was the company “spark plug,” according to Ralph Chaplin, future IWW cartoonist, poet, songsmith, and newspaper editor, who began contributing articles to *ISR* while barely out of his teens.⁴⁵ *ISR*’s 1907 circulation had sunk below its 1901 level, but the Marcys’ lively journalism doubled *ISR* circulation three times in 1909 to nearly ten thousand. An editor’s note conceded the old *ISR* had mistakenly assumed that only a “select few of superior brain power” could write on socialism. “We have seen a new light,” it went on. “Working people know what’s best for them and are better than any theory.”⁴⁶

Kerr’s new approach was based on the belief that grassroots, worker-produced media messages could best counter corporate-sponsored media

hegemony. *ISR* recruited citizen labor journalists to provide eyewitness accounts of labor conflicts. Kerr's 1910 invitation illuminated how instrumental he believed his monthly to be in the class struggle; it also underscores his conviction that *ISR* readers were not passive consumers but active partners:

Each month we propose to take a hand in each new battle. If a big strike is on in your city, send us a concise story of what the men have done and what they are trying to do. Never mind about the flowery language; the *Review* readers want the facts. Above all, send photographs with action in them. What we did for the free speech fight at Spokane and later at New Castle, for the shirt waist workers, the Philadelphia car men and the steel workers at McKees Rocks we can do for you when your fight is on, if you keep us in touch with the situation.⁴⁷

The new policy provided far-flung readers with information as well as community. Oregon strawberry pickers responded by sending *ISR* photos of fifteen-year-old Susie Payne addressing a large crowd during a violent strike in which authorities roughed up girls and women.⁴⁸ Reader contributions followed the radical press model of unabashed partisanship. An account of a Columbus, Ohio, streetcar strike apparently submitted by a reader not only informed readers that Ohio's governor called out troops and police made sixty-one arrests but also proselytized. "It is deplorable that we have given over our streets to a few Philadelphia millionaires with which to grind and browbeat their employees who have asserted their manhood to the extent of demanding a slightly greater portion of what they produce."⁴⁹ The author's use of "we" versus "they" epitomized the sense of group identity that social movement media must foster to mobilize members.

Riveting accounts of labor strife replaced theoretical tracts under the Marcys. The August 1911 cover boasted a new slogan, "The Fighting Magazine of the Working Class" that invariably framed labor heroically. Chaplin's 1913 account of violent West Virginia coalmine strikes typified the gripping new reportorial style:

"They [mine guards] got my gun when they run me out of the creek, but I done borried my buddy's, and I'm goin' back." This is what a slender, grimy lad of sixteen told me one night in the freight yards of a town not far from the martial law zone. He was picking coal for his mothers and sisters at "home" in the tent. His father was in the bullpen at Paterson [N.J.]. The boy had a bullet wound on his shoulder and numerous

bayonet holes in the seat of his ragged breeches. “Took seven of them to run me out,” he boasted with a grin.⁵⁰

Kerr began leavening text with more photographs and illustrations to dramatize labor’s battles. Nina McBride put a human face on labor when she contrasted the Library of Congress’s golden dome to the miserable lot of its “small army of poorly clad, shivering women” who on their hands and knees scrubbed the building’s 326,195 square feet of marble floors.⁵¹ The description shows *ISR*’s penchant for marshaling facts, like Louis Fraina’s report on steel mills that fired off these Bureau of Labor statistics: “Of the total 172,706 employees, 13,868, or 8.03 per cent, received less than 14 cents per hour; 20,527, or 11.89 per cent, received over 14 and under 16 cents; and 51,417, or 29.77 per cent, received over 16 and under 18 cents. Thus 85,812, or 49.69 per cent of all employees, received less than 18 cents per hour.”⁵² *ISR* also reprinted other socialist newspapers’ stories on labor, such as a *Cleveland Press* undercover reporter’s account of riding a steamship nine hundred miles to expose poor conditions faced by teenaged strikebreakers during a seamen’s strike.⁵³

In 1910, a contributor sanctioned antimilitary sabotage in Europe, a view that reflected Kerr’s conversion to IWW-style direct action. “The motive is everything,” rationalized contributor Austin Lewis.⁵⁴ Kerr also reprinted a *Forum* article that argued sabotage could be nonviolent, as when workers slow down or do inferior work.⁵⁵ The journal waxed enthusiastically for the IWW’s 1909 “passive resistance” strike at the McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, steel works. To enforce their demand for weekends off, workers quit work at noon Saturday and stayed out until Monday morning. They also threatened to kill a police officer for every striker killed, a threat to which the *ISR* attributed the strike’s peaceful end. The *ISR* proclaimed, “A concrete ‘lesson’ in ‘direct action’ was taught—and many learned.”⁵⁶ That statement was a far cry from its 1901 contention that a steel strike defeat proved the trade unions needed to vote to tackle the trusts.⁵⁷

An important part of the revamped *ISR*’s mission was to counter the mainstream press’s hostility toward strikers.⁵⁸ An account of a 1913 Michigan copper mine strike stated: “The papers here, under the control of the companies, have, as usual, lied about the strike, slandered the strikers, burned the ‘locations’ up in their columns.”⁵⁹ A report on the ransacking and burning of the *Socialist* blamed local newspapers for inciting the violence in a reversal of mainstream media’s usual framing of labor as a mob: “They are the properties of stock corporations and must do as they are told by their certified owners, in order to

‘make good’ on the job.”⁶⁰

Fostering a Radical Workers’ Culture through Literature

Kerr also published poetry and short fiction to help counter negative mainstream representations of labor. The socialists’ worker alternated between hero and victim, which helps account for why movement literature bounced between buoyant and apocalyptic.⁶¹ Socialist journals romanticized workers in poetry that historian Aileen Kraditor ridicules as the “Hail to Thee O Proletariat genre.”⁶² *ISR* poems became grittier, however, in the publication’s second decade, when realist poetry by IWW organizer Arturo Giovannitti and others began to supplant Victorian sentimentalism. Jack London, arguably the era’s most influential American socialist, was another contributor.⁶³ The January 1917 issue, containing his exclusive “The Dream of Debs,” published weeks after London died at forty, sold out in ten days.⁶⁴ *ISR* occasionally reviewed art from the Marxist perspective that it should be a tool to convert the masses. Phillips Russell, for example, disliked a Belgian sculptor’s idealization of longshoremen with Adonis-like physiques. Russell would sculpt labor as “an east side sweatshop worker, shuffling toward his child-crowded tenement at 6:15 P.M., pausing occasionally to discharge his tubercular sputum into the gutter, his skin pale and corpselike, blue from lack of red-blooded food.”⁶⁵

ISR editor Simons’s contemplations on the relationship between work and art pushed the magazine into new areas of Marxist thought, according to his biographer.⁶⁶ Simons believed in the “instinct of workmanship,” a psychological need to create and take pride in one’s work, another reflection of the cultural shift from Victorianism.⁶⁷ Simons followed the Anglo-American Arts and Crafts movement guided by William Morris, which sprang up in reaction to Victorian excess and the sterility of industrial mass production. Unlike Morris, however, Simons believed handicrafts amounted to dilettantism that failed to resolve the need to harmonize work and creativity.⁶⁸ May Wood Simons, his wife and frequent *ISR* contributor, contributed to the *ISR*’s intellectual inquiry when she wrote that capitalism forced the working class to live surrounded by ugliness. Socialism, she asserted, would grant workers time to create beautiful and useful things.⁶⁹ Her husband struggled to reconcile work and art throughout his career.

Of all its diverse intellectual perambulations, *ISR*’s hallmark internationalism educated its American audience about the global implications of corporate

capitalism better than any other radical periodical. International coverage became more timely and dramatic under the Marcys. Illustrated accounts of capitalist exploitation of poor nations presaged the antiglobalization movement by nearly a century; the *Review* exposed diamond mining exploitation in South Africa, slums in the U.S.-controlled Philippines, and devious Standard Oil operations in China.⁷⁰ Marion Wright reported from Hawaii that the newly introduced pineapple crop could revitalize small farms as long as laws limited corporations to farming fewer than a thousand acres.⁷¹ Headlines adopted a more rebellious tone, as in “The Class War in South Africa,” and “The Coming Economic Revolution in Abyssinia.”⁷² *ISR* support of colonial independence movements was a half century ahead of its times.

J. A. Wayland’s *Appeal* to American Individualism

Meanwhile, smack in the middle of the American Heartland, the *Appeal to Reason* prospered by focusing on domestic issues. The widowed Wayland had set up shop and settled on a gentleman’s farm with his five children in the southeastern corner of Kansas. By 1907, he had erected in downtown Girard a twenty-thousand-square-foot Temple of the Revolution that housed a state-of-the-art, three-deck color Goss cylinder press capable of running off up to forty-five thousand newspapers an hour in a union shop that also published Wayland’s other periodicals and hundreds of pamphlets.⁷³ Official *Appeal* historian George Allan England loved to watch the press in motion. “In fancy I could see the papers flying like brands of living flame to light the darkness of the world,” he recalled.⁷⁴ Wayland prided himself on the operation’s strict forty-seven-hour workweek for more than one hundred employees amid the brightest lighting and highest safety standards in the state.

Columns of epigrams, axioms, and socialistic fables showed off Wayland’s unparalleled talent as a pithy “paragrapher.”⁷⁵ They accounted for much of the four-to-eight-page weekly’s allure. “President Roosevelt is gifted with wonderful musical accomplishments,” one began slyly in 1907. “His favorite instrument is the lyre, and he frequently entertains the nation with it.” Satire inflicted deeper cuts. The self-described “One Hoss Philosophy” Wayland pounded out on his battered typewriter, usually as he chomped the stump of a half-smoked cigar, was plain spoken and confrontational: “The capitalists deny that there are classes here as in Europe and yet they denounce Socialists for trying to array class against class! If there are not classes how can they be arrayed against each other?

They know there are classes, they lie when they say there are none, and they fear the results when the people become conscious of their class interests.”⁷⁶

Wayland insisted no conflict existed between socialism and American individualism. He connected socialism to such American icons as Tom Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and John Brown.⁷⁷ The persuasive power of Wayland’s American vernacular and epic tone is apparent in his explanation of why “We Want Socialism”: “Because it means the freedom of the workers and the leveling upward to a higher plane of all humanity. Because it means the end of poverty and misery and want; the end of the brute struggle for existence, and the beginning of real civilization.”⁷⁸

As the century progressed, the *Appeal*’s meat and potatoes became its passionate if not histrionic crusades targeting enemies of the common man. Historian David Paul Nord’s 1975 study of the *Appeal*’s contents found that attacks on business (12.4 percent) and attacks on government (16.7 percent) accounted for nearly 30 percent of five themes that dominated its pages between 1901 and 1920.⁷⁹ Politics was another important ingredient in the *Appeal* formula. One series outlined socialist successes in Milwaukee, Minneapolis, and Columbus. Elections coverage was expansive, a reflection of Wayland’s moderate pro-politics stance. The *Appeal*’s daily edition published during the Socialist Party’s 1908 national convention highlighted the importance of social movement media when the Associated Press dropped coverage after the first day.⁸⁰ The *Appeal* printed Debs’s acceptance speech and the party platform in a May 23 mega-issue mailed to a million readers. During the 1912 presidential campaign, the *Appeal* published several special editions that totaled nearly 11 million copies.⁸¹

Nord included election coverage among “socialist activities” that comprised another 12.6 percent of editorial content. The category also included matter such as a 1908 briefs column, which reported on socialist branches from Arkansas to Minnesota that gave readers a sense of the movement’s scope. “Social problems”—including poverty, crime, child labor, prostitution, suicide, unsafe working conditions, and alcoholism—filled another 5.9 percent of the news hole.⁸² The newspaper also jumped to the defense of various radicals’ rights to a free press and free speech. Essays scrutinized democracy and parsed socialism. Socialist theory, ranging from reprints of socialist classics to a column of epigrams on “What Socialism Will Do,” filled slightly more of the news hole, 7.4 percent. Essays by Marx, Engels, and George Bernard Shaw made the newspaper a “school for Socialists,” according to historian James Green.⁸³ The *Appeal* also promoted Wayland’s Library of the World’s Workers, a dozen books

by socialist writers delivered monthly that followed the Kerr marketing model. The ad advised, “Socialist books must be read and discussed around the firesides these long winter nights.”⁸⁴

Innovations in Financing Socialist Periodicals

The *Appeal* also invited readers to leave their firesides to hear lectures by editor Debs, an innovative technique for gaining subscriptions. The Indiana native was socialism’s most beloved hero, adored for his midwestern integrity, admired for his stirring oratory, and esteemed for his courage ever since the 1894 Pullman strike. Between 1909 and 1913, the *Appeal* paid him \$100 weekly to write editorials. Locals paid for Debs’s visit by buying hundreds of *Appeal* subscriptions. As *Appeal* historian Elliott Shore observes, “the association with Debs assured its remaining the most important paper in the field.”⁸⁵

Kerr adopted a similar strategy using Haywood, another labor hero. After 1908, the IWW organizer and former Western Federation of Miners leader contributed frequently to *ISR*, whose support helped elect him representative to the 1910 International Socialist Congress in Copenhagen. Upon his return, Haywood undertook a speaking tour across North America under the auspices of the *ISR* Lecture Bureau.⁸⁶ Every ticket entitled the bearer to a three-month subscription. Perhaps more significantly, the arrangement helped build a national base of red socialists. “*ISR* tours brought Haywood and other ‘revolutionists’ into contact with rank-and-file activists, the so-called Jimmy and Jenny Higginses of the movement, in unprecedented fashion,” Ruff wrote.⁸⁷ In exchange, both Haywood and Debs gained national platforms for disseminating their views in the last decade in which print reigned unchallenged in the media universe. Their press tours provided a physical locus for radical culture nurtured in the journals the pair represented.

The most successful marketing technique was Wayland’s formidable “*Appeal* Army” of “Salesmen-Soldiers.” Top salespeople could win a trip to Girard, a motorcycle, or even a yacht.⁸⁸ Each week an *Appeal* column recognized members. “Comrade Kiehl of Ashland, Pa., prescribes fifty-two doses of the *Appeal* for ten neighbors,” read one; another punned, “It may be good to be rich but it’s better to be a Goodrich if one can stir up such clubs as that of Comrade Goodrich of Omaha.”⁸⁹ Besides lavishing individual praise on his sales force, Wayland shrewdly always attributed members’ motives to the larger goal of spreading the socialist gospel. “The *Appeal* army always moves in a body,

always moves against the enemy and wastes not time with bickerings among its members,” a 1902 brief claimed.⁹⁰ By 1917, top salespeople could win forty acres of Minnesota farmland.⁹¹

Business-savvy Wayland also turned to advertising. An entrepreneur at heart, he had no intention of eking out a living like his Populist publisher predecessors. Wayland once said making money under capitalism was like riding a bicycle: “Once you learn to ride it’s easier to keep your balance than to fall off.”⁹² To finance the *Appeal*’s growth, the paper included ads for middle-class gadgets such as stereopticons, Edison phonographs, and sewing machines, as well as for suspect morphine-addiction cures and “Crani-tonic” hair food. “Don’t Be a Wage Slave!” blared an ad that promoted a correspondence course on “How to Become a Mechano-Therapist.” (The ad explained, “The Mechano-Therapist is a drugless physician and a bloodless surgeon.”)⁹³ Wayland also advertised products of the Girard Cereal Company and Girard Manufacturing Company, fruits of business ventures that made the village hum with socialist enterprise. Ads for *Appeal to Reason* cigars boasted the stogies, the boxes that held them, and their labels all were union-made.⁹⁴ Yet other ads encouraged capitalist excess by dangling watches and furniture available on credit. The inevitable collision between Wayland’s business methods and idealism “created tensions at the core of the American socialist movement,” as Shore has amply documented.⁹⁵ The idealistic yet indigent *ISR* also published dubious ads.

The *Appeal* collided with capitalism again when its crew went on strike. In October 1903, all forty-one *Appeal* employees, from the janitor to associate editor Untermann, formed a union and demanded raises and improvements in working conditions. The major sticking point was the demand by several *Appeal* Publishing Company officers that they receive dividends, a capitulation to the profits system that appalled staffers. Wayland immediately agreed to all demands except firing the secretary-treasurer and two other officers, including a Wayland relative, all of whom opposed the union. The entire staff walked out. The direct action sucker-punched Comrade Wayland. “I felt like a mariner in a stout ship tossed at the mercy of a storm,” he confessed to *Appeal* readers.⁹⁶ Two days later, at a public meeting at the courthouse, the strike ended when Wayland offered to hand over the newspaper’s profits and business management to the Socialist Party National Executive Committee. The party refused because of its constitutional ban against having an official party paper.⁹⁷ *Appeal* employees returned to work.

“Fighting Editor” Fred Warren and Muckraking in the *Appeal*

Not long after the strike, the *Appeal*’s most exciting decade commenced with Fred Warren’s appointment to the new position of managing editor. The accomplished printer and failed rural publisher liked to say he entered journalism at “the bottom of the ladder”—as an eleven-year-old printer’s apprentice—and studied the business until he learned it.⁹⁸ Warren began his *Appeal* career working on the press but left in 1901 to publish *Coming Nation*, the periodical Wayland had surrendered to the Ruskin colonists in the 1890s. When the Ruskinites ceased publishing it, Warren and fellow *Appeal* staffer E. N. Richardson reinvented *Coming Nation* as a scrappy muckraking weekly. Unable to crack one hundred thousand in circulation, they closed shop in 1904 and merged *Coming Nation* into the *Appeal*. Warren’s slight build and spectacles gave little hint that he was a journalistic wolverine. The adventuresome editor, “electric with mental energy and fire,” initiated aggressive investigations into labor issues.⁹⁹ His pit-bull hold on sensational stories made the *Appeal* a must-read for socialists and fellow radicals across the country.

“Fred Warren sensed that Americans, despite their protestations for peace, love a fight; and fights are what he gave them,” a staffer observed. “By sensationalizing these fights he kept his readers constantly on their toes with suspense.”¹⁰⁰ Warren immediately dispatched reporter Allen Ricker to Colorado to cover an explosive standoff between miners and mine owners. He published a damning letter Ricker obtained from a Cleveland union-busting firm using what became an *Appeal* journalistic staple: deceit. The reporter had posed as a business owner soliciting union spies.¹⁰¹ Special correspondent J. L. Fitts even went undercover as a convict in a Florida work camp that he exposed as “the cruelest form of slavery.”¹⁰² The reporters’ central roles as protagonists in these stories demonstrates another characteristic of *Appeal* journalism, which frequently inserted itself into the news. Correspondent John Murray was sentenced to one hundred days in a Trinidad, Colorado, jail in 1914, for example, after he was convicted of contempt of court in connection with the newspaper’s petition campaign to recall the region’s federal district judge. The *Appeal* asked readers to donate \$1 to pay for four subscriptions to rally Coloradans. “Our weapon is publicity,” it boasted, “and we wield it mercilessly.”¹⁰³ Warren once claimed the secret to winning results in his journalistic campaigns was to “secure some central figure around which to make the fight.”¹⁰⁴ A 1910s series on industrial accidents, for example, championed a Girard miner who had been crushed in an accident. He won \$11,000 in the lawsuit Wayland sponsored.¹⁰⁵

Warren also added visual punch to *Appeal* pages by cajoling “clever artists on the big papers with propositions to take off their hands any of their radical stuff which their own paper will not print.”¹⁰⁶

Warren set off an *Appeal* avalanche of sensational muckraking, a pioneering form of investigative journalism characterized by a battery of empirical evidence wrapped in moral indignation. The classic example is Ida Tarbell’s 1902 “History of Standard Oil” series in *McClure’s Magazine*, which exposed how John D. Rockefeller Sr. schemed to acquire his oil monopoly.¹⁰⁷ One of Warren’s earliest and most profound editorial decisions, however, resulted in a series that rivals Tarbell’s opus. He sent twenty-two-year-old socialist writer Upton Sinclair into the belly of Packingtown, Chicago’s meatpacking district and metaphor for cannibalistic capitalism. Warren had enjoyed Sinclair’s new novel about slavery, *Manassas*, so he suggested the writer retrain his focus onto twentieth-century “wage slavery.” For seven weeks, Sinclair lived and toiled undercover among Packingtown’s impoverished Lithuanian immigrants. He collected tales of wool pluckers whose fingers had been eaten off by acid and of sausage concocted from moldy meat dosed with borax and glycerin. He shaped the semifictional story to sound a socialist call to arms as his oppressed protagonist, Jurgis Rudkus, becomes enlightened. The first chapter of Sinclair’s series “The Jungle” appeared in the *Appeal* in February 1905.¹⁰⁸

The next year, millions of readers devoured the melodramatic *The Jungle* published by Doubleday, Page & Company, which ignored its radical politics and promoted its grotesque revelations about food processing in what the *New York Times* hailed on its centennial as the first modern book-marketing campaign. When Sinclair met with President Roosevelt, a champion of meat-packaging reform, the *Appeal* milked the story.¹⁰⁹ Within months, Congress passed the landmark Meat Inspection Act and Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906. Sinclair nonetheless deemed his book a failure because readers ignored the workers’ plight. “I aimed at the public’s heart,” he later wrote, “and by accident I hit it in the stomach.”¹¹⁰ *ISR* editor Simons, whose 1899 pamphlet *Packingtown* actually first revealed many of *The Jungle*’s allegations, was indignant that so many critics fixated on the three pages describing meat production.¹¹¹ More than a century later, however, the novel’s force endures. Doubleday’s blockbuster underscored the conundrum facing radical publishers, since neither the *Appeal* nor Sinclair had the capital to print the book. The capitalist press made millions by its depoliticized mass marketing. Sinclair used his profits to buy a farm near Princeton, New Jersey, which he turned into a socialist colony, Helicon Hall.

***Appeal* Muckraker George Shoaf**

The *Appeal*'s star muckraker was George Shoaf, a tee-totaling former pastor, labor organizer, and brothel piano player who never traveled without his .38 caliber revolver and a Bowie knife. The twenty-nine-year-old Texan raconteur described himself as "politically and economically a rampant-revolutionist" who despised objectivity.¹¹² In 1906, Warren sent the veteran yellow journalist to Colorado, where for a while he doubled as correspondent for both William Randolph Hearst's *Chicago American* and the *Appeal*.¹¹³ A "gonzo journalist" decades before Hunter S. Thompson rode with the Hell's Angels, Shoaf often placed himself at the center of his vivid accounts of violence in the coalfields. He disguised himself to investigate the lethal dynamiting of the Independence, Colorado, rail depot and named more than ten men as the culprits.¹¹⁴ Shoaf routinely stretched the ethical bounds of journalism by embellishing or fabricating stories. He saw no conflict in covering a Philadelphia strike and doing publicity for its leader. To obtain interviews for the *Appeal*, he pretended to work for commercial newspapers.¹¹⁵ Shoaf once wrote that a lack of facts should not impede a good story. He advised: "Use the names of the parties involved in the plot, give dates, places and such other incidents as will lend a semblance of truth to the proposition, crowd the story with fictitious names and character, throw ginger and insinuation into the article, write it up 'red hot,' and send it in."¹¹⁶

He also served the very serious purpose of telling labor's side in its impossible battles against the new corporate giants. Shoaf zigzagged the nation in search of capitalist outrages. The *Appeal*'s influence was such that when a federal district attorney refused to allow the "red sheet" *Appeal* reporter to interview Mexican revolutionaries imprisoned in Los Angeles, Shoaf only had to threaten to publish their conversation to get his interview. He included the exchange.¹¹⁷ In Mexico, he covered riots at a Sonoran mine.¹¹⁸ His 1910 investigation of a federal judge in Chicago forced his resignation after members of the loyal *Appeal* army fed Shoaf with evidence against the judge.¹¹⁹ Tips from his former city editor at the *American* also frequently bolstered Shoaf's reportage. Mainstream journalists were some of the socialist muckraker's best sources, he claimed, because they often possessed "valuable inside information" their corporate publishers refused to print.¹²⁰

Shoaf's investigation of Kentucky "nightriders" illustrates how social-movement media departed from the mainstream media model. In 1907, Shoaf investigated the torching of American Tobacco Company warehouses after

denunciations of the deed in the mainstream press sparked Warren's interest. "For experience had taught him that when capitalist newspapers praised a man or movement, working people had better watch out," Shoaf recalled. "Contrariwise, when the capitalist press condemned a man or movement, it was up to the champions of labor to become alert."¹²¹ He discovered the nightriders were small tobacco farmers who felt cheated by the company's monopoly. During their 1910 trials, he produced a series on the "Revolutionary Farmers" illustrated by Ryan Walker, a popular cartoonist whose work had appeared sporadically in the *Appeal* since its 1895 debut. Warren linked the nightriders to iconic American patriotic motifs by prefacing Shoaf's piece with Ralph Waldo Emerson's famous lines, "The embattled farmers stood / And fired the shot heard round the world."¹²² Shoaf's sympathetic stories so pleased the farmers they named the *Appeal* official organ of their newly formed organization.¹²³ Neither he nor Warren considered the affiliation a conflict of interest, because they saw their mission as advocating for the farmers. Shoaf's dubious ethics, however, would eventually catch up to him and the *Appeal*.

The *Appeal* Faces Charges of Monopoly

As *Appeal* circulation peaked at 760,000 in 1913, rival socialist publishers raised other questions about its business methods. At its peak, the *Appeal to Reason* published several state and regional editions, such as a Southwest edition for Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas that occasionally added two extra pages of regional news.¹²⁴ Missouri notes for September 4, 1909, for example, listed socialist Labor Day speakers slated for its larger cities. The *Appeal* paid state party secretaries \$520 a year to act as editors and supply copy for the state editions.¹²⁵ Competitors, however, charged Wayland with engineering a monopoly. Simons, as *ISR* editor in 1904, probably had the *Appeal* in mind when he charged socialist papers were more interested in marketing their product than in serving socialism. "The idea is abroad that if you only shout loud enough and use plenty of printer's ink and smooth phrases, you are preaching socialism," he wrote.¹²⁶ Smaller publications could not compete with the *Appeal*'s low price—fifty cents a year for individuals and only a quarter for groups. *Montana News* editor Ida Crouch-Hazlett grumbled, "It is printed to sell, not to help the party."¹²⁷

The national party's 1911 attempt to appropriate its subscription lecture series reveals more tensions with the influential but independent *Appeal*. The

executive committee announced a national lyceum bureau would handle speakers for all socialist periodicals. Locals that paid headquarters \$400 could keep a 40 percent commission on subscriptions. “This plan makes use of our whole party machinery to support the socialist Press,” announced Secretary J. Mahlon Barnes. “On the other hand, it uses the combined power of ALL the Socialist publications to build up the party organization.”¹²⁸ An incensed Debs seethed that party leaders like Milwaukee newspaper publisher Victor Berger had ridiculed the *Appeal* lecture series, “as they have always ridiculed and denounced the *Appeal* and everybody connected with it, even though the *Appeal*’s policy has been to almost lick their boots and slop over them and appeal for funds for them to start a daily with which they may show their contempt for the *Appeal* seven times a week.”¹²⁹ The lyceum never materialized, and Warren offered no apologies for the *Appeal*’s entrepreneurship. “This is a business institution, selling Socialist literature,” he stated. “Under capitalism it can be nothing else.”¹³⁰ That reality proved a conundrum for hundreds of smaller socialist journals launched to sell the movement’s ideas, not to make profits.

A Broad Swathe of American Socialist Periodicals

Most of these socialist journals were local, like the four-page *Commonwealth* (1911–14) in Everett, Washington, or regional, like the *California Social Democrat*, the state party’s official organ launched in 1911.¹³¹ Fourteen appeared in Arkansas alone between 1901 and 1916. Only a handful attempted national circulation: the big Sunday edition of the daily *New York Call*; Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s one-woman social-feminist magazine, the *Forerunner*; the mild *Christian Socialist*; and *The Young Socialists’ Magazine* for working-class children.¹³² Dozens more socialist periodicals appeared in foreign languages. The ethnic socialist press remained vital to immigrant communities although their numbers gradually fell as the century progressed and the newcomers assimilated. One of the most durable was *Työmies* (“The Worker”), produced in Wisconsin by the Finnish socialist Työmies Society, whose chief function was to publish radical periodicals, pamphlets, and books for immigrants. The society served as a political, social, and cultural center for Finnish American working-class culture, promulgated in part by the newspaper’s chorus and drama clubs.¹³³

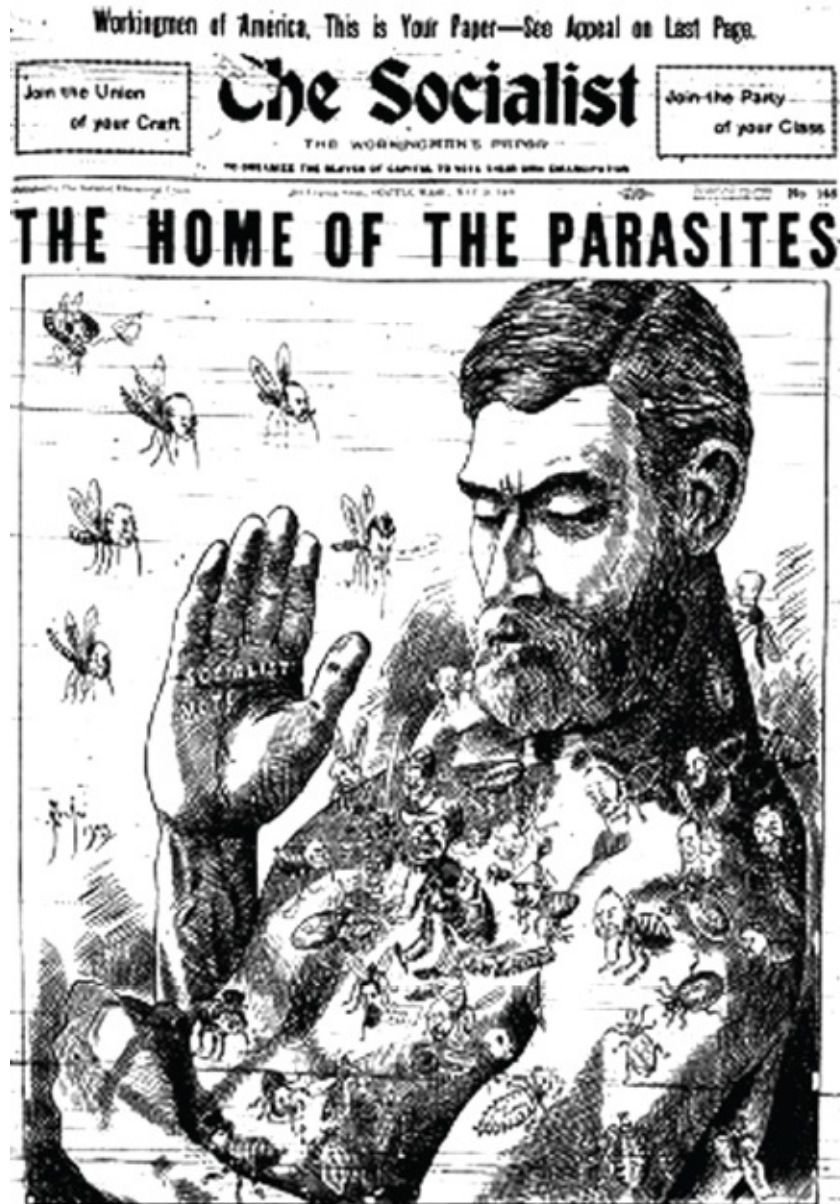
Several union newspapers that endorsed socialism, such as *Miner’s Magazine*, relied on union dues to sustain them but also served several social

movement media functions for socialists.¹³⁴ Arkansas's *Union Labor Bulletin*, official organ of the Central Trades and Labor Council, which unofficially backed socialism, was a font of information for dispersed party members. It announced local meetings, challenges to debate offered by various Socialists, letters from leading state Socialists, and statewide meeting news; supported Socialist campaigns to enact child labor laws and antitrust bills; endorsed government ownership of public utilities; and distributed Debs campaign buttons in 1904. "The *Bulletin* was a valuable tool for the Socialist party," according to historian G. Gregory Kiser, "and contributed to the growing number of Socialists within the state."¹³⁵

A number of Socialist locals boasted their own newspapers through the Socialist Cooperative Publishing Company of Findlay, Ohio, which published papers in ninety-five cities in six states. Co-op general editor W. Harry Spears explained their utility: "If a Socialist writes up a local strike, and brings the revolutionary message printed in a home paper, every striker will read it aloud and think about it and his Socialist education will thereby begin." The local named its newspaper and its local editor. Some content was local, but most comprised generic socialist literature shared by all, although each publication gave the impression it was published locally. The firm followed the Kerr model by requiring locals to buy stock shares at \$10 each.¹³⁶ Yet even the Findlay operation failed to prosper. Warren turned down Spears's late-1910 proposal to make the *Appeal* printing plant Findlay's central distribution point. Spears spun a grand scheme in which papers printed at Girard could be shipped to twenty nationwide distribution points, each of which would spin off twenty-five local newspapers.¹³⁷ Urban radicals enjoyed a wide choice of reading; in 1912, a Seattle man peddled nearly five thousand copies a month of some dozen socialist newspapers from his hand-propelled news cart.¹³⁸

Many socialist journals were the product of a strong-willed individual proprietor. Red socialist Hermon Titus, a physician and former Baptist minister, launched Seattle's first socialist weekly, the lushly illustrated *Socialist*, weeks before the 1900 election, in which he unsuccessfully ran as a Socialist candidate for the U.S. Congress. Titus harbored national ambitions for his fiery journal, which prompted his move to Toledo four years later.¹³⁹ Most socialist publishers, however, eyed smaller markets. "Scores of small-town Socialist weeklies appeared in Oklahoma, from the Okemah *Sledge Hammer* to the *Sentinel Sword of Truth*," recalled publisher Oscar Ameringer, which helped account for the rural state hosting one of the nation's strongest socialist movements. *Oklahoma Pioneer*, the official state party organ, was one of several

newspapers he struggled to keep alive during his career. Ameringer once wrote, “Running a labor paper is like feeding melting butter on the end of a hot awl to an infuriated wildcat.”¹⁴⁰ His financial plan involved soliciting enough subscriptions to knock out a couple of issues. When money ran out, he scrounged for more. Soon he could no longer pay the printing bills, and the periodical ceased. He would launch another shortly.



Hermon Titus's weekly was the most influential socialist newspaper in the Pacific Northwest from 1900 through 1910. May 24, 1903.

The Third Incarnation of *Coming Nation*

Wayland was similarly resolute. In 1910, he reincarnated *Coming Nation* a third time, as an artistic, large-format monthly magazine on high-quality paper that aimed for a more optimistic and constructive tone than the *Appeal*.¹⁴¹ Simons's biographers assert that the third *Coming Nation* pioneered many of the graphics innovations later credited to the *Masses*. The latter publication's famous artists John Sloan and Art Young, in fact, illustrated *Coming Nation* covers, and *Coming Nation* published early work by Walter Lippmann and Sinclair Lewis.¹⁴² Wayland appointed Simons editor; *ISR*'s founding editor had just been fired again, this time by the *Chicago Daily Socialist* in a factional feud. Simons's peripatetic career at six periodicals was not unusual among radical editors, for whom job security was a rarity. He and May Wood Simons produced excellent investigations on land ownership for *Coming Nation* and created the most attractively designed periodical yet produced by the radical press.

Nonfiction features formed the meat of a typical sixteen-page issue, buttressed by fiction, an editorial page, photographs and cartoons, a women's page, a children's activities page, and a back-cover cartoon. Despite the *Coming Nation*'s professed optimism, however, the Simonses' penchant for enervating articles about "the wretchedness of the present" cast a gray tone that even Charles Edward Russell's colorful political commentaries from Washington, D.C., failed to enliven.¹⁴³ The magazine hit a circulation of sixty-thousand by 1912 but bled \$6000 in each of its first two years of operation, a trend that accelerated when the cultured Simonses moved editorial operations from sleepy Girard back to pricey Chicago in February 1913. Warren suspended *Coming Nation* four months later, embittering his relations with the couple. Josephine Conger-Kaneko took it over to replace her socialist weekly, *Progressive Woman*, but it failed to make a third comeback.¹⁴⁴

Simons, Conger-Kaneko, Kerr, and even Wayland devoted editorial space and energy to cajoling if not begging readers for their support. As Simons's biographers observe, "Socialist journalists were accustomed to the ways of the deathbed rescue: hardly a year went by, even among the old standbys of the party press, without at least one front-page prediction of imminent demise unless loyal readers came to the rescue with new subscriptions, donations, or advertisements."¹⁴⁵ A prime example is the *Christian Socialist*'s last-gasp plea on its July 1918 front page: "Death or Deliverance? Shall the *Christian Socialist* Perish Now as a Martyr to World Democracy, or Shall It Live to Help Reconstruct the World?" After fifteen years of publishing the nationally

circulated monthly outside of Chicago, the Rev. Edward Ellis Carr pondered whether it had been worth traveling up to eleven months a year while his seven children grew up poor and neglected. “Thus in the strength of middle manhood,” he summed up his journalistic career, “I surrendered home life and gave my body and soul, a ‘living sacrifice’ for the cause of Socialism.”¹⁴⁶

Originally a Methodist, Carr became pastor of the liberal People’s Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan, in the late 1890s, joined the Social Democratic Party in 1900, and served as a delegate to the 1907 International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart. His newspaper spawned the Christian Socialist Fellowship, a small group of ministers and lay people who tried to build a bridge between the Socialist Party and American churches. Carr’s socially conservative journal published essays by religious and secular authors, reported on party news, sold classic Marxist works, chronicled labor struggles, printed sentimental fiction and poetry, and reprinted material from other socialist periodicals. Carr argued in his 1911 series “Socialism in the Bible” that the book condemned the profits system. Between 1904 and 1914, *Christian Socialist* reached twenty thousand subscribers from its Danville, Illinois, headquarters and published special editions for various Protestant denominations as well as one for Roman Catholics, whose run of 120,000 copies dwarfed all previous numbers.¹⁴⁷

Religion in the Radical Press

Carr numbered among radicals who blended religion and radicalism by following the Protestant-inspired Social Gospel that gelled in the Gilded Age. The gospel preached that true Christianity required followers to actively work to improve social conditions that caused poverty. “A pure social democracy is the political fulfillment of Christianity,” wrote George Herron, onetime *ISR* religion columnist and founder of the Social Crusaders, which published the *Social Crusader*.¹⁴⁸ Socialists, Wobblies, and even anarchists who rejected organized religion embraced Jesus Christ as a fellow worker and purveyor of brotherly love—and a social activist. Ameringer was among many radicals to who professed kinship with the “Carpenter of Nazareth.”¹⁴⁹ The *Masses*’s December 1913 Christmas cover, for example, depicted a poster that read, “Jesus Christ the Workingman of Nazareth Will Speak at Brotherhood Hall—Subject—The Rights of Labor.”¹⁵⁰ Debs often invoked Jesus as a workingman and biblical passages to justify workers’ campaigns against industrial capitalism.¹⁵¹ In turn, Debs also represented a Christ figure to many socialists, who viewed him as a worker who

sacrificed himself for the masses' salvation. Sinclair considered Jesus an agitator whose radical teachings had been corrupted by the institution of Christianity. *National Rip-Saw* editor Henry Tichenor, one of religion's most vociferous critics, preferred another kindred biblical soul: "I always liked old Moses, the rebel of the Jews."¹⁵² Tichenor was among socialists who reviled preacher Billy Sunday, the prototype televangelist, as the antithesis of Christ-like virtue. Up-and-coming socialist poet Carl Sandburg once accosted Sunday in the *Masses*:

You come along ... tearing your shirt
Yelling about Jesus
I want to know ... what the hell ...
You know about Jesus.¹⁵³

Deviations in socialist thought about religion expressed in their journals indicate diversity among socialists. *ISR* published numerous articles and essays both assaying and encouraging the relationship between socialism and religion. Kerr's Pocket Library of Socialism contained several such works. Letters to the *Call* as well as editorial columns debated religion. *Wilshire's* frequently contemplated the relationships among socialism, religion, and spirituality.¹⁵⁴ *Wilshire* proclaimed socialism a religion in the sense that its promised end to poverty would birth spirituality.¹⁵⁵ Muckraker Russell compared his socialist conversion to joining a church. "One must have the experience in grace, one must show that one has come out from the tents of the wicked and capitalism," he explained.¹⁵⁶ The Socialist Party officially deemed religion a private matter in 1908, however, after editor Carr charged *ISR* with promoting atheism.¹⁵⁷ The move reflected a basic fundamental difference between American sensibilities and strict Marxism, which rejected religion as the opiate of the people.

The Catholic Church took an official stance against socialism in the 1890s because of its opposition to private property and secular tone. Many socialists reciprocated their distaste toward the hierarchical, authoritarian institution they often parodied as greedy and hypocritical. Wayland took sacrilege a step further when he lent \$1000 to former *Appeal* staffers to found the rabidly anti-Catholic *Menace* in Missouri in 1911, although editor Warren denied any connection between the periodicals. Warren claimed he rejected Wayland's calls for an anti-Catholic campaign in the *Appeal*. "Nothing would suit our capitalist masters more than a division of the working class on religious lines," the usually combative editor explained.¹⁵⁸ In contrast, the *Rip-Saw's* June 1913 "Pulpit Edition" ripped into both Catholic and Protestant churches as evil institutions

that cared only for the wealthy. Its colorful irreverence was one reason the combative *Rip-Saw* became the nation's second-largest socialist periodical.¹⁵⁹

The Sacrilegious *National Rip-Saw*

Founded in St. Louis in 1904 as a low-brow monthly, the *Rip-Saw* found new life in the 1910s when new publisher Phil Wagner assembled “arguably the finest socialist editorial staff in the world,” according to historian Sally Miller.¹⁶⁰ They included editor Tichenor, Scott Nearing, Ameringer, former *Appeal* reporter Herlee Glessner (H. G.) Creel, and Frank and Kate Richards O’Hare—the latter remembered as “*la passionara* of the Corn Belt” among other accolades.¹⁶¹ Debs signed on after leaving the *Appeal* on bad terms in 1914. Although Kate O’Hare was a salaried associate editor who also earned book royalties, Frank O’Hare’s circulation manager title failed to convey the power he wielded at the newspaper and as manager of his wife’s celebrated career. According to his biographer, Frank believed Kate the better writer and bigger draw of the pair but often gave her story ideas and assignments that he edited when she was on the road.¹⁶²

Based on the *Appeal* model, O’Hare dispatched his wife, Debs, and Ameringer on grueling cross-country tours to build *Rip-Saw* circulation, which reached 180,000 in 1912. They spoke at large socialist encampments resembling religious revivals set up at the edges of small towns. The gatherings drew up to twenty thousand of the Southwest’s “debt-ridden dirt farmers, migratory share tenants, railroad workers, lumberjacks, and their hard-working spouses” to socialist classes and lectures interspersed with socialist songs and music.¹⁶³ Debs recalled his surprise when eight thousand people showed up at his first encampment outside of remote Golden, Texas, in 1914. “Far as the eye could reach along all the roads there was the stream of farmers’ wagons, filled with their families, and all of them waving red flags,” he marveled.¹⁶⁴

The *Rip-Saw* followed the *Appeal* formula of muckraking, capitalist-bashing, and down-home discourse, subsidized by ads for assorted quack medicines.¹⁶⁵ Like the *Appeal*’s Shoaf, Creel traversed the nation in search of capitalist wrongdoing. He spent about a year covering timber workers’ perilous campaign to unionize in Louisiana, where he claimed lumber owners tried to murder him.¹⁶⁶ Tichenor once assigned Creel to work undercover as a Salvation Army Santa Claus to expose the organization’s “graft.”¹⁶⁷ Creel authored a well-researched five-part series on the cotton industry that drew parallels between

“King Cotton’s” wage slavery of both blacks and whites and antebellum chattel slavery. “He verifies his facts and marshals them like an army before putting them on paper,” Tichenor told readers. Even as the editor bragged about the *Rip-Saw*’s accuracy, however, he inaccurately claimed, “No other paper is so carefully edited to exclude everything but rock-bottom facts.”¹⁶⁸ As in other radical periodicals, opinion rippled through sensational *Rip-Saw* reportage as well as its anti-religious rants. Despite its hefty circulation, the *Rip-Saw*’s influence remained largely regional, due to its focus on western land and labor issues combined with its aversion to party politics.

Conclusion

The *Rip-Saw* and hundreds of other socialist organs comprised a lively print culture of resistance to the rising corporate state. Perhaps they best performed the social movement media’s education function. Thousands of essays and articles explaining socialism and deconstructing capitalism gave readers a new way to comprehend social inequity. The socialist press also provided abundant information on movement developments. Just one example is the *Oklahoma Pioneer*, which notified socialists of party meetings, encampments, and campaigns across the state. The journals’ editorials and news provided voice for labor in the string of battles for basic rights to organize and share a more equitable slice of the nation’s booming wealth. The *Appeal*’s citizen journalism, for example, lent voice to strawberry pickers in Oregon and streetcar strikers in Ohio who could not receive a fair hearing in the mainstream press. The widespread geographic distribution of socialist periodicals—including sections of the United States today labeled solidly conservative “red states”—speaks to the breadth of discontent with the new economic order in the early 1900s. A century later, their print culture would be supplanted by online resistance to the global corporate order.

Hundreds of thousands of Americans identified with socialism’s call for reclaiming power from the capitalist behemoths they considered un-American. In the early 1900s, not only the journals’ contents but also their organization created a group identity, as in the case of the *Appeal* army. Simply selling the *Appeal* constituted an act against capitalism. Articles, cartoons, and campaigns sustained a broader imagined community of socialists whose only engagement in the social movement may have been reading the journal that appeared in their mailboxes. The knowledge that they were not alone enabled readers to perhaps

take the next step—voting for a Socialist Party candidate. The poems, jokes, and literature this imagined community shared in its periodicals helped create a distinctive socialist culture that privileged working-class values and sensibilities.

Wayland's behemoth *Appeal* and Kerr's cerebral but scrappy *ISR* stand out in part because they were products of personal journalism, stamped by the character of their long-term, strong-minded publishers. The success of the *ISR* and *Appeal to Reason* can also be partly credited to their publishers' innovations in funding and marketing their journals in a capitalist economy. The socialist journals' numbers attest to radicals' infinite faith in newspapers to educate and hence convert readers. Their diversity also reveals divisions in American socialist thought exemplified by Kerr's split with editor Simons. As will be seen, divisions over policy—compounded by personality conflicts among influential socialist journalists/ politicians—handicapped the socialist press's unlikely campaign to breach the dominant hegemony that sanctified capitalism as the engine of American democracy.

Some socialists believed their movement's biggest handicap was a lack of daily newspapers to counter negative mainstream press frames of their creed. While almost all socialist journals appeared only weekly or monthly, many socialists dreamed of launching a daily newspaper. They believed that by delivering their news through a socialist lens in a timely and comprehensive manner they could compete in the rough-and-tumble world of daily urban journalism. In New York, city socialists saved and scrimped for six years to make their daily newspaper a reality.

CHAPTER TWO

DAILIES

SOCIALISTS TAKE ON THE MAINSTREAM PRESS

“There was something akin to a holy joy in working for the Daily.”

WILLIAM MORRIS FEIGENBAUM, “Ten Years of *The Call*”

■ At 11:02 A.M. on May 30, 1908, city editor Gordon Wood and his handful of bleary-eyed staff members put to bed the first issue of their new daily newspaper in a shabby loft at 6 Park Place in Manhattan, soon to be razed for the fifty-seven-story Woolworth Building. When the young, red-headed “printer’s devil,” or apprentice, raced up the stairs with the first papers a couple of hours later, the journalists perked up to examine their product. “We read everything in sight—advertisements as well as the regular stuff,” Louis Kopelin recalled. They grimaced at typographical errors forced by the deadline rush that littered its pages like pesky flies but overall approved of their “kid.” A few hours later, newsboys paced the Brooklyn Bridge crying out, “Wuxtry—new pa-a-a-per! Buy the *Call*!”

That night, nearly every one of four thousand people packed into the midtown Grand Central Palace clutched a penny issue of the *New York Evening Call*. Nearly all had played a small role in its six-year gestation, some donating pennies to get the press rolling. They cheered wildly when New York Socialist Party chair and emcee, Morris Hillquit, held up the first copy amid the flock of flags and pennants signifying various unions, Socialist Party locals, and the *Jewish Daily Forward*. Edwin Markham of “The Man with the Hoe” fame read his latest overwrought poem, “A Free Press,” written especially for the occasion. Two lines read, “Flash down the sky-born lightnings of the Pen; Let loose the cramped-up thunders of the Types.”

Finally, the man whom the workers had braved a torrential rain to hear stepped onstage. They roared when Eugene Debs hoisted the *Call* and shouted,

“Here it is, every line throbbing with the life of the working class!” Then came the closer, the reason the impoverished publishers invited the charismatic socialist leader east, where he proved as popular among urban factory workers as he had with Rocky Mountains miners. “This paper, *The Call*, this voice of the revolution,” Debs boomed, “ought to have a hundred thousand subscribers from the day of the first issue.”¹

■ ■ ■

Call circulation never came close to Debs’s goal, but by the eve of U.S. entrance into the war in 1917, its publishers claimed it was “widely quoted as the ablest expressions for the thoughts of forward looking Socialists.”² The six-to-eight-page daily was the East’s most important socialist periodical in English. Together with the Socialist Labor Party’s (SLP) doctrinaire *Daily People*; the politically powerful *Milwaukee Leader*; debt-ridden *Chicago Daily Socialist*; and *Oklahoma Daily Leader*, created in 1917 to oppose the war, the *Call* comprised an exclusive if destitute club of English-language socialist periodicals that took on the dizzying demands of daily journalism. Not the least of their challenges was financing a publication officially opposed to capitalism. Socialist dailies in foreign languages fared better, an indication of the working class’s preponderance of immigrants. In 1912, New York’s profitable *Jewish Daily Forward*, or *Forverts*, published in Yiddish, claimed an enviable national circulation of 120,000, for example, and Chicago radicals in 1910 published daily newspapers in Czech, German, and Polish. These dailies could rely on their ethnic communities for support, according to labor press historian Jon Bekken. “They not only did not compete directly with the capitalist press, they could draw upon their communities’ institutional networks and resources for news, readers, and support.”³ Cash-strapped socialist dailies in English struggled to devise alternative economic models to sustain them in the capitalist economy. This chapter will focus on the *Call* in its analysis of the role daily newspapers played in socialist culture and political discourse. The newspaper’s management by a publishing committee, its advocacy journalism, and its role as voice of the New York Socialist Party offer useful examples of how social-movement media functioned differently than the mainstream dailies they reviled but whose news template they often followed.

The *Call* and the *Milwaukee Leader* made the biggest marks of the dailies; the former mainly by providing a voice for eastern workers, the latter by electing Wisconsin Socialists to office. Both spoke for the Socialist Party’s right wing, which championed politics as the soundest route to the cooperative

commonwealth. Their most glaring difference was in management. Unbending Victor Berger served as editor in chief of the *Leader* throughout the 1910s, in contrast to the parade of editors who needed to please the committee that oversaw the *Call*. The Milwaukee daily epitomized the decade's synergy between politics and journalism, as it was instrumental not only in Berger's 1910 election as the nation's first Socialist congressman but also in the election of Milwaukee's entire Socialist slate that year, including its mayor and seven aldermen. By decade's end, however, no radical journalist would pay a higher price than Berger for flexing that power.

New York's Workingman's Cooperative Publishing Association

New Yorkers planted the seed for an English-language daily in 1882 by creating the Workingman's Cooperative Publishing Association (WCPA). It remained inert until a coalition of socialists, other radicals, and unions engaged it to publish a daily *Leader* to boost their mayoral candidate during the 1886 election campaign. He lost and the paper vanished. Six years later, lawyer and real estate developer Leon Malkiel of the SLP's National Executive Committee resurrected the idea. A key financial backer of what became the *Call*, he bought a \$10 ad in the party's weekly *People*, which solicited funds to turn it into a daily. By 1899, the fund reached \$13,000, but the battle between the SLP's Daniel De Leon and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) derailed the daily. A court ruled the newspaper belonged to the SLP, which converted the newspaper into the *Daily People*, edited by De Leon from 1900 through 1914. In 1900, the rival SDP, which included Malkiel and Hillquit, launched the *Worker*, a weekly edited by Algernon Lee. The *Worker* carried the flag for Debs's 1900 presidential bid, and his ninety-one thousand votes convinced supporters the time was ripe for a new socialist newspaper that addressed Americans in English. They began raising the requisite \$50,000 by passing a hat in an old hall on East 13th Street, then revived the WCPA in 1902. Along with a president, treasurer, and three auditors, a board of management comprising a seven-member board of trustees and six advisory board members oversaw the association.⁴ The editor reported to the board. The *Call*'s unconventional organization was as radical as its content.

For the next six years, socialists struggled to raise funds. Like the Charles H. Kerr Company, the WCPA sold bonds at \$5 each, payable in fifteen years at 4 percent interest.⁵ "No Party meeting was complete without a collection for the [daily]," William Feigenbaum recalled. The association sponsored fairs, bazaars,

and picnics. A preview edition published during a sixteen-day fair generated several thousand dollars. Feigenbaum's likening of fundraising to a religious experience indicates the exalted role newspapers played in the radical experience: "It was for the Daily, and there was something akin to a holy joy in working for the Daily that made the limbs less tired, that soothed aching heads, that eased burning feet, that made up for the great expenditures of money of the thousands of Comrades who attended."⁶

The 1906 city elections made clear the pressing need for a Socialist daily when newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst's upstart Municipal Ownership League halved the Socialist vote. Hearst's new party, under whose banner he almost won the mayor's office, appropriated much of the Socialist platform. It called for public control and ownership of gas, water, ice, electric, and transportation services. Hearst newspapers combated trusts in every city in which they were published, and in the early 1900s, Hearst papers routinely sided with workers in big strikes. Biographer David Nasaw asserts that early in his career no other politician "had a record of support for labor as straightforward and consistent as Hearst's."⁷ These stands helped Hearst win two terms as a Democratic congressman from New York but undercut his bid to be the 1904 Democratic candidate for president. "Hearstism" worried *ISR* editor A. M. Simons because the league's call for municipal utilities and nationalization of some industries diverted attention from the socialist mission to organize workers to take control.⁸

A Voice for Workers

Finally, the new daily appeared, its front-page banner quoting Karl Marx: "WORKERS UNITE! YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR CHAINS. YOU HAVE A WORLD TO GAIN!" Otherwise, little distinguished the inaugural front page from other urban dailies'. Editors hoped to compete in New York's jostling newspaper market by offering something for everyone, including a red-tinged woman's department, theater reviews, sports, and children's page. Competitors included Joseph Pulitzer's *World*, which in 1910 boasted a combined morning and evening circulation of 762,671. Hearst's *Evening Journal* followed at 600,000, trailed by the staid morning *New York Times* at 175,000.⁹ The early *Call*'s news menu leaned more toward the yellow journals' sensationalism. "Police Boost Dope in Baltimore," "After Contractors on Blackwell's," and "Boy Deserted in Swamp: Tied to Tree by Tramp" were among front-page fare, alongside stories

of strikes and socialists such as “Chester Is Quiet; No Cars Running” and “Trenton Socialists Active.” The broad editorial content, however, reflected one challenge facing a social movement periodical seeking a mass audience: it risked diluting its socialist group identity.

One feature that distinguished the *Call* from the mainstream press was the abundant information it provided readers about socialist and labor union activities. More than two columns that listed meetings on October 10, 1909, attest to the scope of the city’s radical activity. Letters to the *Call* editor showcase a lively discourse among proponents of various “isms” and the spectrum of radical hues.¹⁰ The *Call* opened its pages to party criticism, an endless source of correspondence, based on the editors’ republican faith in “free discussion.” They reminded contributors to stay civil. “Because one thinks another comrade is jeopardizing the movement, it is not necessary to call him a horse-thief or to reflect upon his ancestry,” a statement explained.¹¹ The newspaper swiftly began emphasizing labor news. Top stories for the January 19, 1910, front page were “Miners’ Convention Now in Full Swing,” “5,000 Pants Workers Go Out on Strike,” “Milk Strikers Sue Boss for Security,” and “Phila. Traction Strike Probable.” *Call* essays stressed practical applications of socialism over theory by addressing questions such as “Why Not Own the Roads?”¹² Human-interest stories emphasized poverty’s cruel toll.¹³ The *Call* also published briefs about socialist news deciphered from foreign exchange newspapers received from around the world, but its global reach fell far short of Kerr’s *ISR*.¹⁴ The *Call* focused on New York. It emphasized its role as the people’s press by attempting a short-lived alternative “newsgathering machine” of correspondents in 1914 it called an “Associated Press of Labor.” Editors told readers: “*The Evening Call* is the people’s paper, your paper. It isn’t muzzled by any trust.”¹⁵

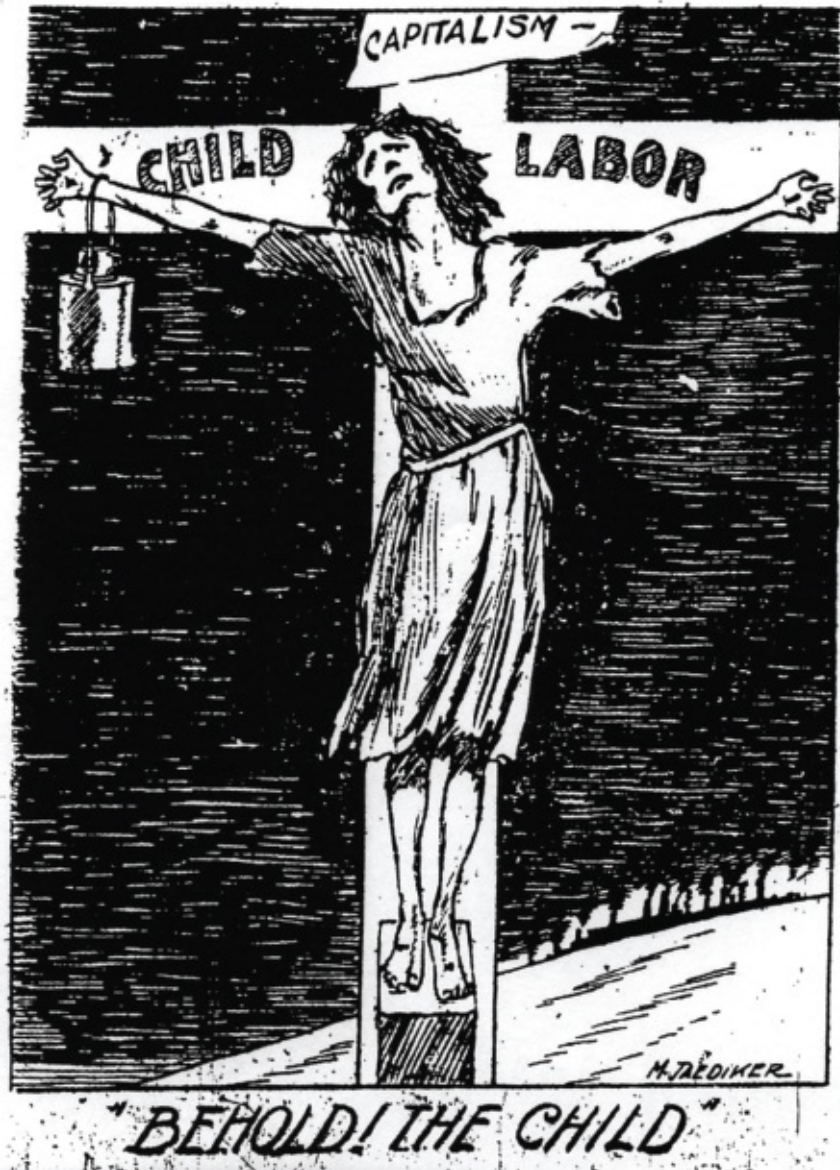
A Sunday edition and magazine added on October 10, 1910, initially relied on heavy translations of socialist thinkers typified by a serialized version of Gustavus Myers’s *History of the Supreme Court of the United States* in mind-numbing blocks of miniscule type. But under editor Frank McDonald and his successor, former *Wilshire*’s magazine associate editor Joshua Wanhope, the Sunday magazine began to feature lively exposés and pungent political cartoons. Like the popular press, the *Call* treated cartoons as an important part of the editorial mix, although its were uniformly political. Ryan Walker of the *Appeal to Reason* contributed, along with mainstream cartoonists like John F. Hart. *Call* publishers boasted, “Its cartoons are as purposeful as they are trenchant with wit and humor.”¹⁶

The *Call*'s best-known byline belonged to celebrated journalist Charles Edward Russell, who began donating his trademark exposés soon after he joined the Socialist Party in 1908. Editors deemed Russell's association with the *Call* as newsworthy as his exposé of the so-called traction trust. The all-cap subhead read, "Charles Edward Russell Begins Fight on Metropolitan Fare Grabbing System." The following bullet boasted: "Famous Writer and Authority on Traction Problems Selects Evening *Call* to Expose Methods." A two-column photo of the square-jawed Russell completed the package.¹⁷ A box asked readers to send tips about the trust.¹⁸ Despite frenzied publicity, however, a citizen Strap Hangers League the *Call* claimed was inspired by Russell's stories never gained traction.¹⁹ The paper gained more currency when socialist writer Robert Hunter, author of the well-received *Poverty*, signed on as associate editor in spring 1909.

Exposés of poor labor conditions and incompetent city government became a *Call* staple. A 1909 exposé revealed the city was collecting rent from Bowery brothels, a 1910 series examined the city's "slovenly" foster care system, and a 1912 investigation described filthy kitchens in the city's top hotels.²⁰ The stream of *Call* exposés followed the yellow-journalism formula of shameless self-promotion.²¹ "The *Call* Wins Fight on Rotten Buildings," "Forced to Act by *Call*'s Exposé," and "The *Call* Helps Union to Get Rid of Spy" typified headlines.²² Its hubris should not obscure the important service the *Call* performed by reporting on the slew of inequities facing the city's working class and connecting them to the broader economic landscape. While its collapse of all social evil into a symptom of capitalism was simplistic and its tone didactic, the *Call* was the only English-language newspaper in New York that explored the direct relationship between the nation's basic economic system and poverty, disease, and unsafe housing.

A 1909 account of rampant unemployment demonstrates how *Call* headlines and text framed subjects as victims of industrial capitalism. It described a Bowery employment office as dismal and dark, its clients' opportunities as bleak: "Their haggard faces and famishing looks tell the same mad tale of a social condition in which men are thrown out because, like old useless rags, they are needed no more by those who cannot exploit them."²³ In 1915, a reporter used similar imagery to describe a bread line of women: "Lean, gaunt-eyed creatures they were, with wispy hair that stuck out grotesquely from under hats.... [M]y feet still ache from standing on one spot too long merely to watch them!"²⁴ The *Call* blamed the sinking of the *Titanic* on capitalism because the ship was undermanned. It claimed the mainstream press followed the *Call*

investigation into the shortage of trained seamen aboard passenger ships.²⁵ In 1915, its comment on the city's slow response to its exposure of firetrap schools dripped with sarcasm: "Perhaps it will need the burning of a hundred children or so to start something."²⁶



Abolishing child labor was one of the *Call*'s causes. *Behold! The Child!* *Call*, October 27, 1908.

***Call* Coverage of the "Uprising of the Twenty Thousand"**

The *Call*'s reference to firetraps harkened one of the twentieth-century's worst industrial disasters. The Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire was the tragic

epilogue to a landmark strike. *Call* coverage of both events sheds light on how it viewed advocacy as part of its journalistic mission. The Uprising of the Twenty Thousand sparked in fall 1909, when Triangle locked out workers who had been trying to organize a union at its factory in the top three floors of the ten-story Asch Building, a half block from Washington Square. The workers, mostly Italian or Jewish immigrant girls and women aged sixteen to twenty-four years, earned about \$5 for working seven days a week from 7:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. sewing popular blouses, known as shirtwaists.²⁷ The number of women picketing Triangle snowballed from a dozen on October 4, 1909, to an unprecedented twenty thousand striking garment workers by November, about two-thirds of the work force. They shut down the entire Lower East Side garment district.²⁸

The strike disproved the notion the young immigrant women were too emotional to organize. The fledgling International Ladies' Garment Workers Union's first fight opened the door to its future success. Part of the strike's significance also lay in its alliance between working-and upper-class women. The Women's Trade Union League, a partnership between middle-class reformers and working-class women to raise wages and improve working conditions, mobilized to provide funds and protect pickets from police assaults. As the *Call* reported, "The police as usual freely used their clubs on strikers."²⁹ Socialist women pitched in with the league, helping strikers conduct shop meetings, canvassing neighborhoods, and bringing in the peripatetic Mother Jones to rally them.³⁰ Middle-class suffragists also lent support. Cross-class alliances frayed, however, as the *Call* revealed.

While the conflict between the factory owners and scrappy seamstresses captured mainstream media attention, none covered the strike in such depth as the *Call*. Two foreign-language socialist dailies, the venerable *New Yorker Volkszeitung* and *Forverts*, also provided blanket coverage in German and Yiddish. The strike inspired improved coverage of women throughout the socialist press. "Across the nation Socialist newspapers increased their coverage of women's news and conveyed an image of women workers at the center of the struggle," according to radical historian Mary Jo Buhle.³¹ The *Call* was a font of information. Bertha Poole Wehyl described the low pay, long hours, and poor conditions behind the strike.³² Sensational headlines topped stories about thirty-seven pickets arrested and fined November 30.³³ The paper published stories listing names and fines of all arrested and printed charts tallying arrests, fines, and jail terms.³⁴ It related accounts of harassment, name-calling, and sexual

advances by police.³⁵ Suffrage leader Anna Howard Shaw held up a copy of a *Call* story at a rally as evidence of police misconduct.³⁶ Poems such as “The Ballad of the Shirt Waist Worker” romanticized the young strikers.³⁷ Editorials scored police and courts, while cartoons lampooned them.³⁸

The *Call* also became actively involved in the strike, a signature function of the radical press.³⁹ Editorial appeals for donations provided the union’s address, and the paper printed rules for pickets in three languages.⁴⁰ On December 29, 1909, it published a special fundraising strike edition, one of many such numbers it produced during various strikes.⁴¹ It is indicative of the radical press mission that all proceeds went to the strike fund, despite the newspaper’s financial woes. Recent Vassar College graduates edited the special, which included articles in Italian, Yiddish, and English. A thousand shirtwaist workers hawked the four-page issue in the streets for a nickel. The lead story framed the strike’s significance as serving socialist interests by raising class consciousness among working women: “For its deeper meaning lies in that the working class woman is feeling her identity of interests with the working class man, that she is not only feeling, but THINKING, and thinking she is becoming conscious of her power as a member of the working class.”⁴²

Besides proselytizing, the special reported many useful facts: lists of shops that settled, dates and fines of 653 arrests, a reprint of the *Survey*’s “The History of the Strike” (another example of radical and mainstream media crossover), and it published portraits of key players. It editorialized for women to only wear shirtwaists bearing the union label. Contributor Theresa Malkiel’s trademark pity seeped from her description of “The Jobless Girls,” which contradicted the empowering image the gutsy young pickets projected: “These timid, poor girls, some of them mere children, had to meet life’s problems almost from the very cradle.” The special number itself became news when photos of the female newsies filled the next day’s paper, which congratulated itself for creating “something of a sensation in local journalistic circles.”⁴³ The underdog *Call* happily reported that the *World*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Telegram* published positive comments—indicating the editors’ need for validation by mainstream newspapers that for once were following the *Call* on a story. All forty-five thousand copies sold out in two hours. One customer paid \$5 for one.⁴⁴

The *Call* relished its role as the strikers’ voice. On Christmas Day, the lead story was “Waist Makers’ Union through *The Call* Denies That the Strike Is about to Be Called Off.” One explanation for the *Call*’s zeal may be the concentration of social feminists affiliated with the newspaper, including Rose

Pastor Stokes and Theresa Malkiel, a member of the national party's National Woman's Committee executive board and a prolific critic of party sexism (see [chapter 9](#)). Former *Call* editor Algernon Lee could have been speaking for Malkiel when he declared at the Mother Jones rally, "The labor movement must organize women, treat them as sisters, as comrades and equals!"⁴⁵ Hillquit, who represented jailed pickets in court, addressed the rally where garment workers first declared their general strike. He raked the mainstream press for trivializing the women's strike: "Your work is no fun and your strike is no joke, and shame on the newspapers who make light of it because you happen to be girls."⁴⁶

Hillquit exaggerated, as the big dailies did give the strikers sympathetic and generous coverage. It was true, however, that mainstream newspapers emphasized the novelty of upending class and gender roles. The colorful spectacle of the teenage girl pickets and their upper-class female guardians in the streets enthralled reporters. Strikers and socialists resented the publicity their wealthy supporters attracted. Millionaire suffragist Alva Vanderbilt Belmont made headlines when she bailed out striking pickets in night court, as did glamorous suffragist Inez Milholland when police arrested her for protesting their treatment of strikers. An irked *Call* pointedly observed, "The great bulk of the material aid given to the strikers came from poor men and women."⁴⁷ Malkiel and two fellow national woman's committee members complained in a letter to the editor about reports that upper-class women did more for strikers than did socialist women. The socialist women's claim that the slight placed them in the most "humiliating position" in the history of the labor movement may have been hyperbolic, but it revealed the party's burgeoning gender gap.⁴⁸ The February 27, 1910, *Call* Sunday magazine challenged the appropriation of the workers' drama in Malkiel's "The Story of a Shirtwaist Striker." Her fictional jailed striker offers an acidic portrait of Milholland, whom she blames for provoking their arrest: "She didn't lose anything by it—had all the excitement she was looking for, posed as a martyr, had a dozen or more pictures taken free of charge and was then taken home by her rich pa. It's on account of her that we'll have to stay here over night, for she had the trial postponed until tomorrow."⁴⁹

Malkiel's story led a Woman's Day edition that contemplated the strike's historic significance in the wake of a February 10, 1910, agreement ending the walkout. It awarded many shirtwaist workers increased wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions. An editorial asserted that the strike demonstrated women's capacity "for organization and heroic resistance."⁵⁰ Another argued that women's move into the working world was developing "what we have been

wont to regard as the masculine traits of courage, self-reliance and capacity for disciplined effort.”⁵¹ Notably absent from the contract, however, was union recognition. Several companies refused even to sign. Among them was Triangle.

Fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory

The March 26, 1911, edition of the *Call* came out dressed in traditional newspaper mourning, a heavy black rule bordering the front-page text. Its contents described how, on the previous afternoon, fire ignited on the Triangle factory’s eighth floor. Employees there and on the tenth floor quickly escaped, but those on the ninth floor were trapped. One of two stairwells filled with smoke; a locked door blocked access to the other. The flimsy iron fire escape collapsed under the weight of fleeing workers, the elevator broke, and none of the fire trucks’ ladders could reach beyond the sixth floor. As flames engulfed the ninth floor, trapped workers began breaking windows and jumping to their deaths. The final death toll stood at 146.⁵²

WCPA board member William Feigenbaum later claimed only the *Call* fought “the fight that naturally arose out of the fire,” by which he meant holding its capitalist owners responsible for murder. The “bitter tears” and condolences of the mainstream press and its push for stricter fire laws, he stated, missed the point.⁵³ A March 27 *Call* editorial called the tragedy “Murder and nothing else but murder.” Socialist artist John Sloan’s iconic five-column skeleton cartoon dominated the front page. It depicts a smoldering female corpse trapped inside a triangle labeled “Rent,” “Profits,” and “Interest.”⁵⁴ The second page displayed photographs of twenty victims. Feigenbaum’s claim was incorrect, however, as Hearst’s *Evening Journal* also linked the deaths to the exploitation of women factory workers in an editorial bluntly entitled, “The Murder of Those Unhappy Girls on Saturday.” The editorial illustrates historian Elizabeth Burt’s point that the tragedy generated considerable mainstream media discourse on women’s poor working conditions missing from their strike coverage.⁵⁵

The *Call* displayed deadline-driven journalistic skills in blanket coverage choreographed by city editor Phillips Russell.⁵⁶ Unlike most dailies, its investigation emphasized the factory owner’s culpability instead of the city’s lax fire code.⁵⁷ It differentiated itself from mainstream papers, which seemed satisfied by the Triangle owners’ indictment. The *Call* campaigned for investigations in other factories. “Any punishment meted out to the Triangle partners should be only the beginning,” it editorialized. “Capitalist justice is

usually satisfied if an individual is punished, but it seeks to let the class continue its former inhuman actions.”⁵⁸ When Triangle tried to buy a \$250 ad, the *Call* called it a bribe, then returned the check, after publishing a copy of it.⁵⁹

The *Call* tried to mobilize workers’ anger and grief. An editorial about the massive funeral demonstration—which it helped organize—observed many more workers were “slaughtered by capitalism.” The demonstration was “going to be an exhibition of growing working class solidarity.”⁶⁰ The *Call* mustered verbal rhetoric to rouse the proletariat.⁶¹ “Yesterday a great, black scar of quivering grief and indignation disfigured the face of New York,” began the front-page account of the somber funeral procession. Huge photographs attested to the more than 150,000 mourners who marched and the million more who watched. City editor Russell optimistically framed the event as a show of empowered labor: “The working class of New York for once has gathered itself together and realizes its strength. It will not forget.”⁶² The Triangle owners’ acquittal, however, showed how difficult it was to change the status quo. A juror described the fire simply as “an act of God.”⁶³

Bayonne Strike Coverage Counters Mainstream Press Frames

Mainstream media’s enamored coverage of the shirtwaist workers proved an exception to its usual hostility toward strikes. *Call* coverage of a 1916 oil-workers strike in Bayonne, New Jersey, offers a more typical example of the role it played in countering popular press frames of strikers as violent mobs. In 1914, the five thousand workers at Standard Oil’s mammoth refinery earned an average of \$2.50 a day for a seventy-six-hour workweek, although rates varied widely according to skills. Most were foreign-born, mostly Poles but also Italians, Russians, Irish, and Czechs. Polish immigrants dominated one of the lowest paid groups, still cleaners, who descended into emptied stills to scrape off tar and other debris while wrapped in heavy clothes to protect them from near-boiling temperatures. Still cleaners complained foremen called them names and sometimes locked them in the stills until they passed out. They first struck in summer 1915, demanding the dismissal of the most disliked foreman and a 15 percent wage increase.

The company refused to consider their demands, following the usual script dictated by Standard Oil owners, John D. Rockefeller senior and junior. Bayonne’s mayor, who doubled as Standard’s lawyer, urged the plant manager to hire “private security guards,” basically five hundred toughs recruited off the

street and handed guns, as a *Call* exposé explained.⁶⁴ Over the next few days, they shot and killed five unarmed workers. A guard also died, and police and deputies rampaged worker neighborhoods. Robert Minor, a leading newspaper cartoonist and avowed socialist, not only sketched but also wrote about the scene for the *Call*. “I had never seen men fired on before, and it seemed strange that they did not run as the bullets whistled around their ears,” he wrote.⁶⁵ Police arrested 129 workers, as well as 100 guards. The latter arrests pleased workers, who heeded the sheriff’s appeal to their patriotism to return to work. Standard Oil fired the most active strikers, although remaining workers received raises up to 10 percent. No one ever was charged with the killings.⁶⁶

That incident was prelude to the October 4, 1916, walkout of six hundred paraffin workers who demanded a 20 percent raise. It mushroomed to eight thousand workers. Privileged English-speaking craftsmen refused to join the call for a general strike by several other departments, comprising mainly Polish, Hungarian, and Italian workers. The snub brought into high relief the nativism that fueled ugly anger against the waves of foreigners flooding the nation. Americans targeted the strange-sounding, oddly dressed eastern Europeans as the source of multitudinous problems arising from industrialism like so much factory smoke. Standard Oil excelled at exploiting this prejudice. On October 10, management shut down the entire plant when twelve hundred strikers blocked the entrance, putting forty-six hundred men out of work. The mayor approved any police action his client, Standard Oil, deemed necessary. The partnership exemplified the complicity between the state and corporations as they invariably joined forces against workers. Police bullets killed nine people, including a bride sitting by her upstairs parlor window, and twenty-five others were seriously injured in the ensuing violence.

The contrast between popular press and *Call* coverage illustrates the role the radical newspapers played in reporting on labor. Historian Philip Foner observes that “the New York commercial press reported the strike in Bayonne as if it were the act of an insurrectionary mob rather than a prime example of police mob rule.”⁶⁷ The liberal magazine *New Republic* blamed the New York dailies for inciting violence. It asserted, “From the very beginning of the battle, the authorities of Bayonne resorted to violence and mob law to break the strike.” It charged the big city dailies with falsifying headlines to make it appear police were “heroically upholding the law against a criminal mob.” Examples of this misleading framing included “Bayonne Rioters Held in Check” (*New York Times*); “Bayonne Rioters Loot Stores” (*New York Journal*); “New Bayonne Mob Clubbed Out of Captured R.R. Station” (*New York Mail*); and “Strike Mobs Rout

Police, Loot and Burn in Bayonne” (*Evening World*). “The reporting of the Bayonne strike has breathed the spirit of lynch law and the pogrom,” *New Republic* concluded. “It has done enormous injury to the prestige of the press among thinking workingmen.”⁶⁸

The *Call* had correctly predicted strikers would die and the mainstream press would blame strikers.⁶⁹ It editorialized, “Never yet has there been a labor dispute with Rockefeller that the laborers did not furnish some corpses to grace the occasion.”⁷⁰ Police stormed the workers’ neighborhood, shooting at people, tearing up saloons that defied an order to close, and raiding homes.⁷¹ “I felt last night that I just got back from the trenches,” wrote *Call* reporter A. M. Howland. “The police were merciless. Again and again the shots rang out. Again and again the ambulances passed and returned.”⁷² *Call* photographs showed police with Gatling guns and rapid-firing rifles, as did mainstream newspapers. Once past the headlines and lead paragraphs, in fact, the big dailies’ reportage was similar to the *Call*’s; the difference lay with where they placed blame for the violence. The final line of Howland’s *Call* account made no pretense of objectivity: “WHAT SHALL BE DONE WITH THESE MURDERS?”

Another significant difference in coverage was that only the *Call* addressed the xenophobic nature of the assault. The *Bayonne Evening Review* blamed the alleged riots on the immigrant workers’ “hereditary impulse to wreck and ruin when the restraints of their native environment was [*sic*] changed to the wide freedom in their new homes in America.”⁷³ A *New York Times* story, headlined “Threaten Race War in Bayonne Strike,” valorized three hundred English-speaking workers who planned to march through the strike zone to return to work.⁷⁴ Radical journalist John Reed noted in a *New York Tribune* magazine piece later summarized by the *Call* that Bayonne typified the Rockefeller strategy to exploit “racial and religious antipathies.”⁷⁵ *Call* city editor Chester Wright likewise observed the racial divide between “whites” and the “others,” Bayonne’s many eastern European immigrants. “For the ‘others’ yesterday was a day of terror,” he wrote.⁷⁶ He reported seeing police bash strikers’ skulls with clubs. Howland’s first-person account of a police march upon the workers’ neighborhood reported: “The strikers are utterly unorganized. Practically all of them are unarmed. I saw no evidence of either attack or even of resistance, only a desire to get out of the way of the murderous bullets.”⁷⁷

Anarchy reigned in Bayonne, exclaimed a *Call* editorial—visual rhetoric that demonstrated the reach of anarchist stereotypes.⁷⁸ Another charged that Standard Oil ran New Jersey.⁷⁹ The *Call* also interviewed workers to put the strike in

context. It quoted an anonymous striker, “And, let me tell you, a man can’t raise a family on \$1.50 a day or \$2 a day. That’s what this strike is all about it.”⁸⁰ This sympathetic coverage spurred Bayonne police to confiscate copies of the *Call*, whose publishers continued to smuggle it across the bay.⁸¹ The violence subsided October 14, American-born workers reentered the plant under police guard October 18, and the remaining strikers returned to work two days later on the promise that federal mediators would negotiate for their demands. The *Call* headline framed it differently: “Bayonne Strikers Cowed by Guns of Standard Oil Controlled Police, Vote to Resume Work.”⁸² Although the *Call* termed the strike a failure because no union resulted, historian George Dorsey argues the lethal encounters marked a turning point in labor history because they forced the Rockefellers to finally revamp their medieval labor policy. Standard Oil created an annuity and benefit plan for retirees and introduced death, accident, and sickness benefits. Personnel and training departments established hiring and firing guidelines, and a 1918 employment department set procedures for discipline, wage adjustments, and appeals.⁸³ Ironically, the corporation’s pragmatic workplace improvements worked against the social revolution.

A Counter to Hegemonic Media

As demonstrated during the Bayonne and shirtwaist strikes, a major *Call* function was to counter hegemonic news accounts of the labor movement. Hostile strike coverage helps explain why the *Call* considered the mainstream press labor’s enemy.⁸⁴ The newspaper also was forthright about the socialist press mission to create a social revolution. “That is the party’s means of publicity, and on publicity depends its chances of doing really effective work,” a 1912 editorial explained.⁸⁵ As a social movement medium, *Call* publishers rejected the purported objectivity of journalism’s so-called information model adopted by the *New York Times* in the 1890s that came to dominate twentieth-century journalism.⁸⁶ While it may be easier to spot bias in the *Call*’s passionate pro-labor coverage, however, scholars have since pointed out that hegemonic media are as biased toward dominant powers despite their claims of objectivity.⁸⁷

One drawback of the *Call*’s binary view of its place in the media landscape—socialist versus capitalist press—was that it frequently reduced the newspaper to a reactive role. It could not shed its need to legitimate itself through the prism of hegemonic media. *Call* scoops invariably pointed out that other dailies

ignored news it broke, while other stories simply reacted to the big dailies' perceived lies or omissions. The *Call* bragged it drove the big dailies to publicize exposures by the U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations "by day after day of the hardest kind of fighting."⁸⁸ It also implored readers not to patronize commercial newspapers because "as long as the workers read and support them they can be trusted to suppress the truth and print the lies."⁸⁹

The *Call*'s rationale that "the working class cannot permit the capitalist class to determine for it what is news and what is not news" presaged what by the end of the twentieth century had mushroomed into a full-blown social movement determined to limit media conglomeration.⁹⁰ Although lacking a vocabulary to critique media hegemony, the *Call* understood the media's central role in maintaining the status quo by ignoring challenges to the social order. An editorial referred to that point when the *Call* congratulated itself on a 1910 series detailing the lynching of striking Florida cigar makers: "The daily newspapers, metropolitan and other, their columns filled with all sorts of worthless information, were silent about the civil war in Tampa."⁹¹ Its antipress rhetoric sometimes approached parody, however, as in this 1916 *Call* description of the capitalist press as "a slimy, venomous, treacherous, lying reptile; a thing to hate and avoid; a thing worthy of no credence whatever in a life and death struggle between labor and capital."⁹²

Browsing *Call* pages, however, reveals the divide between New York's radical and mainstream press was less a dichotomy than the *Call* acknowledged. While editors trolled the commercial press to counter their omissions, exaggerations, and takes on the news,⁹³ they also reprinted excerpts and views from them.⁹⁴ Hearst's newspapers, for example, touted forms of moderate socialism. Popular journalists sympathetic to socialism frequently donated their services to radical journals. Lincoln Steffens, for example, sent dispatches to the *Call* from the 1908 Republican convention, which the newspaper covered at length from its Socialist perspective. "Republicans Have Not Fooled the Workers," read a typical headline.⁹⁵ Conversely, star *Call* muckraker Russell continued to publish in mainstream journals.

Showcase for Socialist Culture

Another key *Call* function was nurturing a rich socialist culture that produced books, plays, songs, and art. Articles and reviews reflected the Marxist belief that art should be political; no frilly odes to spring sullied *Call* pages. It

reviewed provocative books such as Franz Boas's *The Mind of Primitive Man* or Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Man-Made World; or, Our Andocentric Culture*. A review praised young Carl Sandburg as "Chicago's Socialist Poet."⁹⁶ A 1915 profile of barefoot dancer Isadora Duncan explained how her philosophy claimed beauty "not just for artists but the heritage of free men and women."⁹⁷ Art was propagandistic, as evident in a photo of Bruno Zimm's sculpture *The Figure of Labor*. The shirtless man holding a pick, the sculptor told the *Call*, symbolizes "the growing consciousness among the working class of the power and destiny of labor, as set forth in the Socialist philosophy."⁹⁸ Playwright Percy MacKaye argued that to fulfill its civic potential the theater must be publicly owned.⁹⁹ A 1916 full-page tribute to the late, lapsed socialist Jack London demonstrated the novelist's stature among radicals.¹⁰⁰ Poems sentimentalized the downtrodden, but much content indicates the *Call* envisioned a middle-class audience.¹⁰¹ Lines from Irish socialist playwright George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* made their way into antiwar editorials.¹⁰² Reviews of classical concerts appeared amid politically colored works.¹⁰³ The *mélange* demonstrated the under-capitalized *Call*'s efforts to offer socialist readers the rich stew of news available in the advertising-fat commercial dailies.

In later years, the *Call* attempted humor with "The Silver Lining," a column of one-liners, such as "The wine press is not the only press that uses 'grape vine' service."¹⁰⁴ The all-American pastime of baseball dominated the sports columns, although they began to diversify when 1912 Olympics reports showcased photographs of track racers, cyclists, marathon runners, and pole-vaulters. Broader sports coverage on new American leisure pursuits such as golf and tennis soon followed.¹⁰⁵ Notices and ads for socialist picnics, lectures, and dances indicate the social aspects of radical culture, including the *Call*'s annual fair and ball.¹⁰⁶ The Socialist Press Club publicized its speakers and an annual costume ball.¹⁰⁷ The *Call* always put out a special edition for radicals' most important holiday, May Day, the International Worker's Day, which commemorated the four Haymarket martyrs and their fight for an eight-hour day. May 1 had been the intended launch date for the *Call*, which unfailingly covered the holiday's annual big parades in special editions.¹⁰⁸ Unlike IWW and anarchist periodicals, the milder *Call* also recognized the federal Labor Day in September.¹⁰⁹

Voice of the New York Socialist Party

The gradualist *Call*'s attention to labor derived from its prime political function of recruiting members to the Socialist Party and electing its political candidates. "Congress is the boss," asserted a 1914 editorial that sounded less than revolutionary. A group of "good, active, aggressive, militant, class-conscious" socialists elected to Congress, it argued, could "do more in a year for Socialism and the working class than in ten years of steady agitation."¹¹⁰ The newspaper engaged in politics beyond editorializing. On the eve of the 1913 election, it mobilized readers to distribute a hundred thousand copies of the Socialist Municipal Platform.¹¹¹ Every election inspired ebullient front-page headlines, no matter how tepid the Socialist turnout.¹¹² A 1913 banner announcing "New York Socialists Roll Up Big Vote," for example, obscured that the count was no higher than the anemic pre-*Call* election of 1905. The static tally contradicted its backers' belief that a newspaper could dramatically boost the Socialist vote. Circulation temporarily slumped, as it invariably followed party fortunes. The following year, however, the paper and New York party enjoyed their biggest political success when the *Call* supported Meyer London (1871–1926), a Lithuanian-born labor lawyer who in 1914 became the nation's second socialist congressman, representing the city's Lower East Side. The *Call* also helped elect several socialist state legislators, and in 1917 Hillquit's antiwar platform took 21.7 percent of the vote (he finished last) in the city's three-way mayoral race. In 1916, it printed London's pioneering address in full from the *Congressional Record* on the need for "social insurance": unemployment, sickness and disability coverage, old-age insurance, and benefits for widows and orphans.¹¹³

The *Call*'s preference for politics over direct action put it at odds with more militant socialists such as *ISR*'s Charles Kerr. Disgruntled former staffer J. Louis Engdahl was among critics who derided the relatively conservative *Call* as "Hillquit's paper."¹¹⁴ The socialist lawyer wielded tremendous influence as a member of both the WCPA and the Socialist Party's National Executive Committee.¹¹⁵ When a 1911 *Call* editorial called the committee "incompetent" and "dishonest," Hillquit complained to the WCPA Board of Management.¹¹⁶ The newspaper published a board resolution that the statement was "out of place."¹¹⁷

Challenges Facing a Newspaper Run by Committee

That incident reveals the dilemma facing editors of a newspaper run by committee. Rankled editors tended to leave. Within weeks of the launch, city

editor Gordon replaced William Mailly as managing editor.¹¹⁸ In 1909, Lee left to head the newly established Rand School of Social Science, the same year the office moved to a ramshackle loft at 442 Pearl Street. Herman Simpson, a City College instructor, briefly succeeded Lee as editor in chief before Sunday magazine editor McDonald assumed the title in 1912. Russell served as city editor for two years around that time, followed by Harry Smith. The board lured Wright as managing editor in May 1914. The former *Milwaukee Leader* city editor had moved to Chicago's *Morning World* and had last worked for the *California Social-Democrat*. He brought western ideas about journalistic "punch" to New York.¹¹⁹ Fred Warren lured several *Call* writers in the other direction, to the *Appeal to Reason*, including his eventual successor, Kopelin.¹²⁰

"The *Call* has had many editors," Hillquit acknowledged in 1914. "Not one of them has been able to stand the terrific pace for a long time—some have been forced to quit in time, some have broken down under the strain."¹²¹ Opportunities to offend readers appeared infinite: A Brooklyn socialist complained the *Call* ignored his borough, an electrical workers union threatened a libel lawsuit, and a reader objected to serving wine at *Call* picnics.¹²² "The active workers on the paper are forever harshly criticized, almost reproved for what they do, and don't do," a WCPA member observed.¹²³ The board considered publishing a leaflet in 1911 to document all the *Call* had done for organized labor, including "reporting their strikes, giving publicity to their troubles and wishes, refusing to accept advertisements from scab concerns."¹²⁴

Neither did working conditions enhance employee loyalty. Reporters clambered up a set of rickety stairs to desks lined up in a dimly lit sixth-floor loft littered with old newspapers. Linotype machines rattled and banged louder than the reporters' clacking typewriters amid a foul odor wafting from the stereotyping machine. Everyone worked at least twelve hours a day, some seven days a week. "We are dubbing along the best way we can trying to cover New York in metropolitan newspaper style with a shoestring," Gordon wrote the board.¹²⁵ Lee not only wrote editorials but also laid out several pages, penned a "Questions and Answers" column, answered letters to the editor, read all his competitors, and recruited volunteer contributors. One was Mailly's wife, Bertha, who edited the children's department and covered school boards, suffrage, and public meetings, when not fundraising. Although circulation approached twenty thousand within weeks of its 1908 debut, the *Call* was in debt from its first number, and the \$36.73 collected at a July 4 picnic was insufficient to solve the cash-flow problem. Not even salaried employees could count on

receiving a paycheck.¹²⁶ More than once business manager Anna Maley announced at the end of the week she lacked cash to pay staffers. “I have one hundred dollars left to be divided among us eight, or ten, as the case may be,” she would tell the reporters. “How shall we divide it? Who needs the money most?”

“THE LIFE OF THE CALL IS IN DANGER!” screamed a letter to association members in September, inaugurating what became a perpetual fundraising tactic.¹²⁷ The situation was so dire that at an October gathering, Stokes, a former factory worker who wed a socialist millionaire, unhooked her pearl pin and tossed it into a hat passed for the *Call*.¹²⁸ The WCPA rejected a suggestion to shutter the *Call* after the election.¹²⁹ In December, the Socialist Party of Greater New York instructed locals to prioritize helping the *Call*.¹³⁰ Someone in 1909 suggested a self-denial week in a full-page *Call* “symposium” on its needs. The newspaper switched to a morning edition at the end of its first month to lower delivery costs and doubled its price to two cents. Debs’s former running mate Benjamin Hanford made maudlin appeals to workers to donate a day’s wages: “Do you love your dollar better than your *Call*?” Readers responded with almost \$6,000.¹³¹ Even in 1912, when the *Call* hit its peak thirty-two thousand circulation, the association suffered a net loss of nearly \$10,000.¹³² WCPA president William Passage threatened to resign in 1914 unless the newspaper stopped making “morally unjustifiable” false claims it ever would be self-sustaining.¹³³ “The limit of running the paper on faith and forced loans has been reached,” he wrote.¹³⁴

Office politics also rocked the *Call*. In February 1909, seventeen staffers demanded the removal of Otto Wegener, the paper’s third business manager. Wegener stayed, however, and the board officiously denied their request that an office staffer attend meetings.¹³⁵ When the assistant business manager quit, she portrayed Wegener as oppressive as any capitalist boss: “The manager has harped so much upon the laziness and lack of discipline among our workers that he has convinced the Board as it seems that the one thing necessary for our success is a set of automatons who never greet each other, who never smile, who bend to their work as he does with the stolidity and immovability of The Man with the Hoe.”¹³⁶

Advertising created another minefield. Although editors likened mainstream media ads to the “most brazen bribery,” they acknowledged the *Call* needed them, since it charged only a penny per copy.¹³⁷ H. Gaylord Wilshire worried whether the *Call* could succeed without the big department store ads that were

the popular dailies' financial mainstay. He suggested it consider appealing more to women.¹³⁸ Ads actually were abundant enough to allow the *Call* to expand to eight pages on Saturdays in January 1909.¹³⁹ While never a huge revenue source, display ads from 1910 indicate businesses believed the *Call* audience possessed some disposable income. These included real estate, homebuilders, Ex-Lax, unionlabel clothing, shoe stores, Long Island lakeside bungalow sites, optometrists, furniture, gas ranges, and pianos. The piano ads caused a stir when the board refused a union demand to ban them because it claimed the company treated labor unfairly. The *Call* offered the union space to air its grievances but would not drop the ad.¹⁴⁰ Other ads offended other constituencies. The Finnish branch of the New York socialists protested an ad for "capitalistic" *Pearson's* magazine.¹⁴¹ A shareholder objected to one for the "crooked" Workingmen's Sick and Death Benefit Fund.¹⁴² In 1911, complaints from two people instigated an investigation that resulted in a seven-page report clearing editors on charges that advertisers controlled *Call* editorial policy.¹⁴³ The socialist daily never fully resolved the contradiction between its charge that big advertisers controlled the mainstream press and its practice of accepting ads.¹⁴⁴

Criticism came from other corners. Letters offer insights into why the *Call* had a difficult time forging a strong identity. Hanford complained, "I wish they'd put a little more definite and concrete socialism in it," while a reader grumbled "longwinded" editorials parsed politics and unionism too much.¹⁴⁵ WCPA secretary J. Chant Lipes offered this assessment on the *Call's* first anniversary: "Too little news (compared with *Journal* and *World*), too much socialism, too gloomy, pessimistic a tone." He recommended more local news, "bright, snappy humorous reportorial work," and shorter, simpler editorials.¹⁴⁶ Backer Leon Malkiel in 1913 called a conference with editors to revamp the paper. "The news section of the *Call* to-day presents the appearance more of a Trade Union Bulletin than a newspaper," he complained.¹⁴⁷ A 1912 gathering at the Socialist Press Club in New York gave journalists a chance to gripe about their critics. "The Socialists dictate continually what should be the policy of their papers, regardless as to whether they are carpenters or skilled in newspaper work," stated Allan Benson, future *Appeal* editor and presidential candidate.¹⁴⁸ The WCPA board interfered, for example, after two party locals condemned articles they charged offended the Catholic Church.¹⁴⁹

In July 1913, the board instructed then-editor MacDonald: Condense the AFL newsletter to one page. Contain sports to two columns. Ignore boxing matches because pugilism is barbaric.¹⁵⁰ Passage threatened to resign a second

time when MacDonald ignored his instructions. “We have not tried to dictate how you should write every line of the paper, but there are certain rules that we have laid down, that we consider entirely reasonable,” he wrote him. “To put it perfectly plain, ‘Obey orders.’”¹⁵¹ MacDonald left in 1914. Three board members helped city editor Harry Smith put out the paper until Warren, the Kansas tornado propelling the *Appeal to Reason*, accepted the board’s invitation to edit the *Call* in spring 1915. He toyed with investing \$100,000 in it but followed the *Call*’s long line of editors out the door within a year.¹⁵²

Victor Berger’s Influential *Milwaukee Leader*

The challenges of publishing a newspaper by committee provide a key to understanding why the *Call* never exerted as much political influence as did Berger’s *Milwaukee Leader*.¹⁵³ Even though the Social Democratic Publishing Company produced the daily newspaper, Berger controlled a majority share of stock shared by several unions, branches of the Socialist Party, and individuals. Berger also was editor in chief of the *Leader* from its inaugural issue on December 7, 1911, until 1919. The *Leader* also benefitted from “guardian angel” Elizabeth H. Thomas, a wealthy Milwaukee Quaker with radical views, who besides fundraising routinely gave the *Leader* crucial cash infusions.¹⁵⁴ Like other socialist publishing ventures, the *Leader* was owned mainly by working-class shareholders, including more than 100 branches of the Socialist Party and 140 trade unions.¹⁵⁵ And also like its peers, it never turned a profit.

The *Leader* espoused Berger’s “Milwaukee Idea” of bridging revolutionary change with labor struggles. Detractors sneeringly dubbed his mild brand of Democratic socialism “sewer socialism” because of its focus on improving municipal works. Milwaukee socialists under Berger campaigned on basic issues such as honest government, cleaning up neighborhoods, creating community parks, installing sewers, improving schools, and publically owning utilities. The *Leader* also provided a voice for socialists by countering the virulent anti-socialist views of the city’s mainstream *Milwaukee Journal* and *Milwaukee Sentinel*. Berger’s cooperation with trade unions and attendance at AFL conventions as a member of the Typographical Union, however, rankled more militant socialists.

Berger’s independence and strength as an editor contrasted with the cooks crowding the *Call*’s kitchen. “Victor was a powerful editorial writer and a most skilful editor,” recalled editor Oscar Ameringer, who left the *Rip-Saw* for the

Leader in 1912. “He would appeal to the reason, intelligence, heart and obvious self-interest of the many, but never to the passions and prejudices of the mob.”¹⁵⁶ Berger’s bellicosity, stubbornness, and vitriol also earned him enemies, especially after he led Socialist Party right-wingers in the bitter battle of words that would split the party at the 1912 national convention.

Another reason the *Leader* succeeded was that Milwaukee was home to an unusually robust socialist base, due to its many German immigrants. Most trade union members were socialists. The *Leader*’s audience was extremely loyal, in part because of its high quality and breadth of coverage, including sports, women’s news, health, drama, international news, and, of course, labor news. A “punchy” editorial page mixed political commentary with lighter fare. Editor John Work, who oversaw the paper’s editorial page from 1917 to its 1942 demise, attributed its popularity to its commitment to serving readers’ diverse interests. “It must not merely see the serious problems,” he said, “but also the lighter side of life.”¹⁵⁷ Radical writer Joseph Cohen hit upon another reason for the *Leader*’s influence when he observed that a great newspaper is the product of a strong individual. “It is the expression of one man behind the pen,” he wrote in 1911. “To speak of a committee or a board of managers editing a paper is a contradiction in terms, even where the paper is the organ of a party.”¹⁵⁸ Berger oversaw a strong stable of socialist journalists, including at times editors Algie Simons, Ernest Untermann, Ameringer, and Frederick Heath, and contributor Carl Sandburg. Berger’s wife, Meta Schlichting Berger, also was deeply involved behind the scenes and in the local Party.

The *Leader* was instrumental in city Socialists’ political success. The Social Democratic Party could blanket the city with a hundred thousand circulars in twenty-four hours. Its “bundle brigade” of men and boys canvassed the final four Sunday mornings before every election, distributing literature in English, Polish, and German. When socialists elected their entire ticket in 1910, including Berger as the nation’s first Socialist congressman, the national press flocked to Milwaukee. The positive coverage attributed the party’s success to Berger’s leadership and organization. He personified the adage that power of the press belongs to he who owns one.¹⁵⁹ The *Leader* championed its editor in chief, whom a headline called “The Dynamo of the Socialists.” One of Berger’s first bills sought an old-age pension, precursor of social security.¹⁶⁰ Although he lost in 1912, through the *Leader*, Berger remained a conservative force—some would say a negative one—in socialist politics.

The declaration of war in Europe in summer 1914 put the *Leader* in a conundrum. A native of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Berger tried to appear

neutral. Nonetheless, the *Leader* could not resist blaming the British for the deaths of 1,198 passengers aboard the RMS *Lusitania*, which a German submarine torpedoed off the Irish coast in May 1915 on the grounds that the ship's cargo contained munitions. German readers still faulted the *Leader* as pro-British, while disapproving socialist readers considered it pro-war. Advertising and circulation dropped to just above forty thousand by 1917. As the United States drew closer to joining in, the *Leader's* antiwar stance threatened to torpedo the socialists' most successful English-language daily newspaper.

The *Chicago Daily Socialist's* Experiment in Collectivity

Only one English-language socialist daily newspaper's circulation ever topped six figures, and that bubble burst in less than seven months. The *Chicago Daily Socialist* is a case study of the overwhelming odds against a radical periodical succeeding in a capitalist market—even when its commercial competition is eliminated, as historian Bekken has discussed.¹⁶¹ The newspaper's difficulties reflected larger questions about the relationship between the Socialist Party and its press. It emerged from a daily campaign sheet published by the Chicago Socialist Party's moderate weekly *Chicago Socialist* during the last two weeks of the 1906 election and edited by rebellious Chicago newspaper scion Joseph Medill Patterson, a recent convert to socialism. The weekly had changed its name in 1902 from the *Workers' Call*, which Algie Simons and SLP members had created in 1899. *ISR* editor Simons and May Wood Simons signed on to assist Patterson. After the election, the weekly reinvented itself as the four-page *Chicago Daily Socialist*. Simons succeeded Patterson as editor, which he juggled with his *ISR* duties over the next two years until Kerr fired him. The Simonses produced early issues by candlelight on the third floor of the only print shop in the city that would publish their radical newspaper.¹⁶² The daily hired several reporters and contracted with the United Press wire service but counted on readers to literally make it their newspaper.¹⁶³

The *Daily Socialist's* experiment in collectivity demonstrated radical journalists' axiom that the press belonged to the people. Editors stated in its first issue that they expected the local party's thirty thousand members to contribute editorially. The idea of thirty thousand editors amused the mainstream press, but the newspaper claimed, "Every day a large number of letters come to the editorial office from every section of the country giving suggestions, news items, clippings, etc." Volunteers included well-known journalists like Russell, who

donated articles “merely for the sake of speaking what they wished.”¹⁶⁴ Labor stories dominated editorial columns, which also featured politics, sports, women’s news, human-interest stories, cartoons, and socialist news that ranged from local party meeting notices to developments on the other side of the world. Simons scholar Robert Huston notes, however, that relatively little Chicago news appeared, indicating the reader-reporter experiment was less than a success. “The basic criterion for selection of news items seemed to be their contribution to the ridicule of the capitalist system,” Huston writes.¹⁶⁵ The gradualist newspaper’s contemporary critics included Debs, who scorned its alleged catering to AFL craft unions. The *Chicago Socialist* supported labor materially as well as editorially. In 1910, for example, when Chicago garment workers followed their New York sisters onto the picket line, the newspaper imitated the *Call* by publishing a strike edition that raised \$4,000 for them.¹⁶⁶

As at the *Call*, a committee managed the Chicago daily. The Workingmen’s Publishing Society and its five-person board of directors was an even more fractious venture in collectivity than the WCPA. After the Socialist Party of Chicago local had donated its weekly to the cooperative venture, it realized, aghast, it also had lost editorial control of the daily published in its name. The local waged a protracted but unsuccessful battle to regain control, which drained resources and energy. In a familiar scenario, the society juggled stocks, bonds, subscriptions, donations, and a smattering of advertisements to keep the daily financially afloat, according to Bekken.¹⁶⁷ Millionaire party member William Bross Lloyd bailed it out more than once, and Julius Wayland donated funds.¹⁶⁸ Engdahl, who replaced Simons as the daily’s editor in 1910, recalled, “It was always kicking death through financial starvation.”¹⁶⁹

The Chicago newspaper strike of spring 1912 looked like the struggling socialist newspaper’s financial salvation. When *Chicago Examiner* publishers locked out striking union pressmen, all other newspaper unions, save the printers, joined in a sympathy strike. Even newsboys refused to sell the struck newspapers. “They were the real soldiers of the labor war,” Engdahl recalled.¹⁷⁰ Police arrested striking teenage newsies on disorderly conduct charges and beat them, according to *ISR*. Many unions imposed severe fines on anyone reading a scab paper. Although “finks” sold capitalist papers protected by police, their circulation plummeted.¹⁷¹

The *Daily Socialist* leaped in to fill the void. Renamed the *Chicago Daily World*, it ballooned to three hundred staffers and increased to twelve pages, while pumping up circulation from some thirty thousand to more than three hundred thousand combined daily in morning and evening editions through May

and June.¹⁷² Engdahl stated it “expanded in a night from a crippled, four-page, one edition sheet with hardly a dozen thousand circulation, into both morning and afternoon publications, each with several editions.”¹⁷³ Simons took a half dozen of the *Milwaukee Leader*’s best staff, including editor Chester Wright and cartoonist Gordon Nye.

Unfortunately, newsprint, ink, and payroll costs skyrocketed along with circulation. Big advertisers, such as department stores, didn’t follow readers to the *Daily Socialist*. The small, overworked printing press had to be replaced, so the society borrowed \$60,000 from the Pressmen’s Union. Circulation settled at around one hundred thousand when the strike ended, but debts piled up. The directors borrowed another \$45,000 from a partnership of lawyers and bankers, placing their socialist daily at the mercy of capitalists. By the end of 1912, its debt exceeded \$120,000, forcing the society to declare bankruptcy.¹⁷⁴ The sheriff nailed a notice to the building, and the linotypes stopped. Squabbling did not stop with the *Daily*’s demise on December 4, 1912; an embittered Engdahl charged it “was choked to death in a local factional struggle,” while the *ISR* said, in effect, good riddance: “For years the *Daily* has paralyzed the Socialist party of Chicago.”¹⁷⁵ The Wobblies’ *Industrial Worker* commented the daily left “only bad odor and a train of unpaid bills.”¹⁷⁶

Conclusion

Urban socialist dailies had a tough time competing with the diverse contents of commercial dailies thick with ads from department stores and other businesses that did not patronize the anticapitalist press. The *Call* nonetheless found a niche in the New York media market by championing workers and their causes. Publishing daily did improve its ability to provide a voice for labor and the Socialist Party. The *Call* provided a robust challenge to political and economic hegemony and remains an important record of workers’ hard-won fight for decent pay and working conditions in the 1910s. One striking common feature of the socialist dailies is that so many social issues they addressed remain contested on a global scale today: child labor, gender inequity, reproductive rights, poverty, war, corporate greed, sweatshops, workplace safety, and media conglomeration. The Lower East Side sweatshops that the *Call* criticized are now replicated in Asia and Africa, one focus of the antiglobalization movement that is the online progeny of the radical press.

The *Call* and other dailies performed several social movement media

functions. Reporters' eyewitness accounts countered hegemonic media reports of labor actions as mob attacks. Beyond reporting, the *Call* was actively involved in strikes, a characteristic of social movement media. It undisputedly served as city socialists' main source of information about socialist meetings, labor actions, lectures, party politics, and social events. Such timely events were more suited to daily journalism than the long theoretical tracts that appeared in magazines such as the monthly *ISR*. *Call* editors were content to largely cede to them the function of Marxist education. As the voice of the city's Socialist Party, the *Call* helped elect a Socialist congressional representative and local office holders. Art and literature reviews supported socialist culture, which found a locus in popular events such as the *Call*'s annual picnic. Similarly, the spirit that infused the newspaper's 1908 debut captured the sense of community a radical newspaper could create.

Sustaining community proved difficult, however, as indicated by lagging *Call* circulation. Perhaps the diverse New York media market offered too much competition for a socialist daily newspaper in English. While foreign-language socialist dailies offered immigrant communities strong senses of identity based on cultural and ethnic bonds, and trade union newsletters better targeted members' interests, the *Call*'s broader and more diffuse audience proved more elusive. Further limiting its appeal was that the *Call* represented the city's gradualist socialists, whose conservative brand of socialism could be easily appropriated by reformist journals. Discussions among its board and editors show not even they agreed on what exactly a socialist newspaper should look like.

The greater success of the *Milwaukee Leader* indicated a place for a socialist daily existed on the media menu. Perhaps the key was the iron leadership embodied in Berger. The *Call*'s struggles to publish a newspaper by committee and the collapse of the collective experiment in Chicago lend weight to that thesis. The *Chicago Daily Socialist* debacle is telling, because it was a microcosm of the radical press, which also struggled to define the proper relationship between the party and its press. Perennial conflicts between the Workers' Publishing Society and the party local mirrored the national party's exasperation with hundreds of independent socialist periodicals published coast to coast. The Socialist Party constitution had forbidden a national party-owned periodical to thwart an editorial dictatorship, but the ban created a void filled by the Babel of competing socialist periodicals.

None flexed more muscle than the *Appeal to Reason*. Urbanites Berger and Hillquit despised the swaggering homespun weekly. Their differences, along with the fate of Americanism radicalism, came to a head in 1912, but not before

the Kansan colossus played a key role in a milestone labor trial that symbolized the struggle for the soul of America.

CHAPTER THREE

BOMBS AND BOMBAST

TRIALS OF SOCIALIST NEWSPAPERS

He has put the Federal courts on trial before the working class of the United States.

CHARLES KERR, “Fred Warren Goes to Jail”

■ Eight inches of virgin snow featherbedded the streets of Caldwell, Idaho, population twenty-two hundred, the day before New Year’s Eve 1905. Frank Steunenberg stamped a crease into the white comforter blanketing the road as he shuffled home. Life had quieted down during the more than five years since the former governor had declared martial law and called federal troops to Coeur d’Alene to quash miners trying to organize. Troops had rounded up every male resident of union-controlled Burke and locked up more than a thousand of them; hundreds more later were stuffed into boxcars under conditions so severe that several died. Eugene Debs warned Steunenberg his “day of reckoning” awaited, but the strife must have seemed far in the past to the portly gentleman farmer headed home on that quiet night. As he pulled open his gate latch, however, a tremendous explosion shattered the arctic silence and shredded his legs. He died an hour later.¹

■ ■ ■

Steunenberg’s unsolved murder set off a “struggle for the soul of America,” as historian J. Anthony Lukas subtitled his definitive account. Print media served as the prime battlefield as mainstream and radical journalists vied for the public’s hearts and minds. The popular press spun a tale of murderous, vengeful miners, while the radical press led by the *Appeal to Reason* placed industrial capitalism on trial. The shadow of Haymarket hung over the case as its significance took on epic proportions in the U.S. labor wars. *Appeal* editor Fred Warren charged into

the Steunenberg case as if it were a “holy crusade,” according to Lukas.² The *Appeal*’s aggressive coverage accelerated the Post Office Department’s decade-long campaign to shut it down. The Steunenberg case offers a window to explore the extensive legal and extralegal persecution that imperiled radical journalists in the early 1900s, pushing them into becoming pioneering champions of a free press. This chapter examines the radical press’s role in reporting on state-sanctioned violence against workers who tried to organize. It shows how visual rhetoric, in addition to verbal rhetoric, figured in socialist press accounts of nearly forgotten labor wars across the land that culminated in the 1914 Ludlow Massacre.

The *Appeal*’s Call to Arms

Radicals suspected the Mine Owners Association planted the bomb, but police arrested miner Harry Orchard as he nursed a New Year’s Day cocktail in Caldwell’s Saratoga Hotel bar. Infamous Pinkerton investigator James McParland wangled a questionable sixty-four-page confession from Orchard. Labor organizers despised McParland even more than they did most Pinkertons because his dubious testimony in the 1870s’ Molly Maguires trials had helped send ten Irish-born miners to the gallows.³ Orchard implicated three leaders of the Western Federation of Miners in the Steunenberg murder: President Charles Moyer, former executive board member George Pettibone, and General Secretary William “Big Bill” Haywood, the towering, one-eyed ex-miner whose booming voice regaled his hardscrabble audiences with humor and insouciance toward socialist theory. “I’ve never read Marx’s *Capital*, but I have the marks of capital all over me,” was one of many folksy aphorisms that won the volatile Haywood a loyal following.⁴ One admirer was the *Appeal*’s George Shoaf, who called the WFM leader “the god of my idolatry.”⁵ The WFM was the most class-conscious and militant labor organization in America, and Haywood a fierce advocate of direct action in the form of strikes, work slowdowns, boycotts, and sabotage. He had helped found the Industrial Workers of the World in Chicago, just months before the Idaho bombing. McParland orchestrated the kidnapping of Haywood and his colleagues in Denver on February 17, 1906, using extradition papers that falsely claimed the trio had been at the scene of the murder. At dawn, a special train secretly whisked them to Idaho, where they faced murder charges.

The “Kidnappers Special” enraged radical journalists who turned the case

into a national cause célèbre. A Supreme Court ruling that declared the kidnapping constitutional stoked the fire.⁶ The *ISR* editorialized, “There is not the slightest doubt ... that this is all part of a deliberate plot to railroad these innocent men to the gallows.”⁷ All the socialist papers denounced the arrests and called for action. In *Wilshire’s*, Ernest Untermann likened radicals’ reaction to the Battle of Lexington: “In a twinkling I seemed to see red signals blazing through the night, and Paul Revere multiplied by ten thousand, riding through the darkest America and shouting: ‘Up, up, men, the plutocrats are coming!’”⁸

Wilshire’s described the mainstream news framing that the radical press corps sought to counter: “Dynamite scares, bomb discoveries, resolutions against agitators by prominent citizens who don’t sign their names, denunciations of Debs by imaginary ‘Socialists,’ accounts of mysterious strangers purchasing dangerous chemicals at local drug stores, etc., etc., follow each other in rapid succession.”⁹ *ISR* claimed the “continuous pounding of the Socialist Press” forced the Hearst newspaper chain to defend the trio. *ISR* called for parades and open-air meetings to educate the public about the case’s ramifications for labor.¹⁰ Some fifty thousand marchers converged at New York’s Grand Central Station at a protest chaired by Morris Hillquit.¹¹ H. Gaylord Wilshire called for a general strike to protest the Idaho events, which he called the “greatest crime against a free people in modern history.”¹² *Wilshire’s* also dispatched Joshua Wanhope to Caldwell, where the future *Call* Sunday editor conducted a three-hour prison interview with Haywood and his codefendants because the sheriff was unaware the magazine was socialist.¹³

Except for two local reporters, however, Shoaf was the only journalist at the preliminary hearing.¹⁴ His *Appeal* account typified the hyperbolic coverage to follow: “There will be stories of martyrdom to narrate besides which only that of Christ will stand comparison.” In future stories, he claimed, “it will be proved that Steunenberg was assassinated by the paid emissary of some outraged cattle king.” In his next figurative breath, he promised, “I will not appeal to lurid rhetoric.” Shoaf once again cast himself as protagonist when he claimed that “death and danger” stalked him as he investigated the crime.¹⁵ Beneath this hubris, however, Shoaf offered a provocative analysis of the case that tied it to the industrial development of the West, particularly by the Rockefellers’ eastern juggernaut, Standard Oil. Shoaf and Warren pressed their investigation off and on for more than a year.¹⁶

The March 10, 1906, *Appeal* raised the stakes by featuring a page-one essay by Debs so incendiary that Warren ran it by J. A. Wayland. The publisher green-

lighted its publication even though it could mean the suppression of the newspaper and the arrest of Debs, Warren, and Wayland for inciting armed rebellion. The bold red banner headline declared, “Arouse Ye Slaves,” above an essay that vowed revolt by millions if the defendants were convicted and executed. “There have been twenty years of revolutionary education, agitation, and organization since the Haymarket tragedy, and if an attempt is made to repeat it, there will be a revolution and I will do all in my power to precipitate it,” Debs wrote.¹⁷ The call to arms departed from the *Appeal*’s usual advocacy of ballots over bullets, an indication of how the Haywood trial had enflamed radicals. The *Appeal* claimed its March 10 issue made the trial front-page news across the nation’s capitalist press.

The Postal Campaign to Silence the *Appeal to Reason*

Debs’s essay also precipitated a decade-long federal campaign to shutter the *Appeal*. Instead of outright censorship, the government wielded the powers of the Post Office Department. Postal suppression was subtler but nearly as crippling to the distribution of ideas. “The mails,” as legal scholar Morris Cohn stated in 1932, “are the arteries of current intelligence.” Because of the federal government’s “wide powers” over the mail, Cohn argues, “it holds the pulse of the nation in its control.”¹⁸ Postal censorship is as old as the nation.¹⁹ Colonial postmasters usually were party newspaper publishers who excluded opposition newspapers from the mail. In 1836, the postmaster general allowed local post offices to refuse to mail abolition literature, even though Congress had rejected President Andrew Jackson’s bill to exclude antislavery material from the mail. In the early nineteenth century, Congress inadvertently empowered the Post Office to discriminate when, to promote culture and nation-building, it set lower mail rates for newspapers. The Classification Act of 1879 extended the reduced second-class mail rate to magazines. Six years later, Congress halved the second-class periodicals rate to a penny per pound, a fraction of the eight cents per pound charged for third-class advertising materials. First-class rates for letters and postcards were even higher (fourth class was parcel post). Requirements for second-class mail included that the periodical maintain a paid circulation, appear on a regular basis, and “be published for the dissemination of information of a public character or be devoted to literature, the sciences, or some special industry,” according to scholar Jane Kennedy.²⁰ This federal subsidy stimulated the emergence of mass-circulation magazines and big-city newspapers that in the

1880s ballooned into American mass media.²¹

Second-class mail rates also gave the Post Office extraordinary powers of censorship, as scores of dissident periodicals would discover over the next two decades. To suppress dissident publications, the post office used the vague requirement that second-class journals' information be "of a public character." Official *Appeal* historian George Allan England stated losing second-class mail privileges was financially "equivalent to a death sentence" for a publication.²² The post office had first tried to rescind the *Appeal*'s second-class mail status in 1901, on the grounds it had no paid circulation. Wayland used his newspaper to publicly combat the ruling. The postmaster general's letter appeared on the *Appeal*'s front page alongside Wayland's outraged response.²³ When 64,193 Americans signed statements attesting they were paid subscribers, the post office dropped the case.²⁴

Haywood coverage offered officials another opening to suppress the *Appeal*. The post office deemed the 4 million copies of a mammoth March 31, 1906, "Rescue Edition" unmailable under an arcane rule that limited second-class rates to no more than double a newspaper's paid circulation. The rule "hampers the *Appeal* very much in its work," Warren rued, as the *Appeal*'s paid circulation totaled only three hundred thousand.²⁵ Upton Sinclair denounced the move as a ruse for censorship. "Rule after rule, which had been moldering forgotten in the dusty archives of officialism [sic] has been resurrected and applied to the *Appeal*," Sinclair wrote. "This is the first time in our country's history, so far as I know, that an official censor has presumed to set bounds upon the utterance of political passion."²⁶ The post office proved more powerful than the attorney general, who discovered no criminal law applied when President Theodore Roosevelt, a favorite target of *Appeal* writers and cartoonists, attempted to prosecute Debs and Wayland for the incendiary "Arouse Ye Slaves" essay.²⁷ Canada, however, did ban the *Appeal* as seditious. Warren traveled north and, coupled with protests by Canadian socialists, persuaded authorities to lift the ban.²⁸ In 1907, the U.S. post office demanded \$5000 in excess postage for another mammoth special, the February 16 "Kidnaping Anniversary Edition." Warren rushed to Washington, D.C., and persuaded postal officials to reverse the ruling.²⁹

Debs bragged the special edition set a world circulation record. He cited staggering statistics: one hundred men and women in three shifts daily printed, folded, and counted twenty-five thousand copies per hour. The 2,270,636 copies of the kidnapping edition required ten barrels of ink, six carloads of paper, three

thousand mailbags, and ten U.S. mail cars.³⁰ Sensational campaigns and self-promotion stemming from the Steunenberg case, in fact, ramped up *Appeal* general circulation to 760,000 by 1913. David Paul Nord found that from 1901 through 1912 the *Appeal* devoted 12.3 percent of its content to promoting itself. An additional 3.4 percent of articles that described government persecution of the *Appeal*, however, indicate how dangerous it was for even the nation's largest radical periodical to dissent.³¹ Once again thwarted, the Post Office was not done with the *Appeal*.

A Media Circus in Boise

The fifty or so reporters who descended on Boise for Haywood's trial, which began May 9, 1907, created one of the century's earliest media circuses. The atmosphere surely prepared defense lawyer Clarence Darrow, hired by AFL leader Samuel Gompers, for his defense of Tennessee science teacher John Scopes's right to teach evolution eighteen years later. Former railroad lawyer Darrow was a freethinker and pacifist who supported the radicals' call for redistributing wealth, although he never joined the Socialist Party.³² His beliefs contrasted to Gompers's pragmatic focus on organizing only skilled-craft unions and collective bargaining, which made him the scourge of many radicals.³³ The mainstream press corps included the Associated Press's Martin Eagan, Joseph Pulitzer's Chicago bureau chief, and a *San Francisco Examiner* reporter who filed for the Hearst papers. *McClure's* and *Harper's Weekly* assigned correspondents. Lukas deems former Montana prosecutor C. P. Connolly's reportage for *Collier's Weekly* the best and most balanced.

Shoaf was the most flamboyant of an unprecedented number of radical journalists covering the trial. Their presence indicated the high stakes radicals believed the trial's outcome had for the working class. They reframed the mainstream narrative to put capitalism on trial. "Not Haywood but the capitalist class of America is the one on trial, not just a murder trial of a union man, but a trial of the entire modern world," editorialized *Forverts* publisher Abraham Cahan on its July 4 front page.³⁴ Cahan blanketed the Lower East Side newspaper's front page with editorials, wire service stories, and telegrams from *Socialist* publisher Hermon Titus about the distant trial nearly every day for three months. Titus was so committed that in 1906 he again moved the newspaper he founded in Seattle from Toledo to Caldwell through the trial proceedings the following summer. Cahan and Titus's passion reflected the significance radicals

nationwide accorded the trial. Socialist reporters countered what they labeled a governmental frame-up with highly charged stories that accused generic “capitalists” of falsehoods and plots. Titus’s *Forverts* account of Orchard’s testimony, for example, labeled one antiunion prosecution witness a liar.³⁵ In the *Socialist*, Titus’s wife, Hattie, filed colorful sidebars.

She was one of several female radical journalists in Boise. Others included Olive Johnson of New York’s *People* and well-known socialist organizer Ida Crouch-Hazlett of the *Montana News*, who also filed stories for the *Milwaukee Social-Democratic Herald*. Margherita Arlina Hamm filed for *Progress*, *Cheerful Moments*, and *Wilshire’s* alongside her husband, *Wilshire’s* correspondent John McMahon, and Untermann.³⁶ As indicated by the use of her maiden name, Canadian-born Hamm was an independent “New Woman” who covered the Chinese-Japanese and Spanish-American wars, worked in a Lower East Side settlement house, authored a half-dozen books, and belonged to the Royal Geographical Society.³⁷

Other radical periodicals covering the trial included the IWW’s *Industrial Union Bulletin*, the *Idaho Unionist*, and the *Pittsburgh Leader*. Shoaf’s *Appeal* trial stories filled nearly a third of the four-page *Chicago Daily Socialist* for two months.³⁸ Wilshire questioned the blanket coverage, indicating that more than vindicating labor motivated some radical publishers. “My own idea is that it may be possible that this Moyer-Haywood business is not so conducive to getting up subscribers as a good many of the socialists seem to think,” he wrote Warren.³⁹ Crouch-Hazlett, who had a personal score to settle with the *Appeal*’s Shoaf, expressed her disdain for Wayland’s *Appeal* to an *Idaho Statesman* reporter. The charge would be repeated more than once over the next few years: “It is printed to selling purposes—not to help the party.”⁴⁰

Crouch-Hazlett’s words in the mainstream press were unusual because of tension between the rival journalistic camps. Radical journalists in Caldwell were ostracized and worse. An armed detective trailed Hamm until she smacked him across the face with a newspaper, Johnson received threats slipped under her hotel room door, and someone opened Crouch-Hazlett’s mail.⁴¹ While mainstream reporters sat at tables inside the courtroom rail, the radicals behind it scribbled on a shelf attached to its back. Socialists were unwelcome when McParland wined and dined the mainstream press corps in his elegant hotel suite or while holding court in the lobby. *Wilshire’s* McMahon observed capitalist reporters “growing fat and red-faced on the viands and wines of a generous prosecution.”⁴² Shoaf mocked McParland’s schmoozing: “Particular emphasis is placed upon the horrors of the dynamite explosion and the press writers are

psychologized into believing that dynamite is hid in chunks all over Ada and Canyon counties.”⁴³ Bodyguards broke three radical photographers’ cameras when they tried to snap McParland’s picture.⁴⁴ Governor Frank Gooding excluded radicals when he escorted reporters from the AP, the *New York Times*, and the *New York Sun* to an exclusive prison interview with the state’s star witness. Meanwhile, Darrow hacked away at Orchard’s bad character, pressuring him into admitting he was a paid informant for mine owners. Darrow’s eleven-hour closing argument moved jurors to tears. They acquitted Haywood on July 29, 1907. Radicals claimed the howl they raised saved Haywood’s life—and perhaps the nation from class war. Editor Warren took his activism one step farther.

Battling Censorship, Boosting Circulation

Back on January 12, 1907, the *Appeal*’s front page had offered a “\$1,000 in gold” reward for anyone to kidnap former Kentucky governor William Taylor. Since being indicted as an accessory in the assassination of a political rival, Taylor had been living as a fugitive in neighboring Indiana, which refused to extradite him. Warren seized the opportunity to publicize the illegality of the “Kidnapping Special” that netted Haywood. “Let us put it up to the capitalist courts to treat a capitalist as it does a workingman,” Warren’s notice informed readers, “and make the case so prominent that it will rivet the attention of the entire civilized world.”⁴⁵ Besides challenging the justice system’s fairness, Warren’s offer put the *Appeal* in the spotlight. The newspaper moved from reporting to making news.⁴⁶ The *Appeal* mailed more than fifteen thousand circulars to its sales army in envelopes that restated the reward offer. The message on the outside of the envelopes enabled the Department of Justice to enlist postal law to charge Warren with “sending scurrilous, defamatory and threatening matter through the mails.”⁴⁷ Although a guilty plea would have resulted only in a small fine, Warren and Wayland chose to fight the charges as a violation of the First Amendment guarantee of a free press.⁴⁸

The *Appeal* unabashedly equated boosting circulation with combating censorship during the two years that the government dragged out the legal proceedings. The July 18, 1908, front page urged readers to obtain one thousand subs to stop the post office “press muzzle”; on August 1 it featured order blanks for subs titled “‘My Reply to the Press Censor.’” The *Appeal* paid more attention to its postal case than to presidential candidate Debs’s “Red Special” whistle-

stop rail tour that was attracting mainstream media.⁴⁹ *Appeal* coverage unsurprisingly followed the case's freepress frame. Warren wrote the front-page account of his conviction, for which he received a six-month jail sentence and a \$1,500 fine. He vowed to fight on. "The impotent edict of a capitalist court is as the buzzing of a beetle against a tornado," Warren blustered.⁵⁰ The U.S. Court of Appeals rejected Warren's First Amendment argument in late 1910. "The comrades here are all jubilant at your going to jail," Shoaf teased from New York. "All of them agreed that going to jail would mean a tremendous increase in the circulation of the *Appeal to Reason* and would do more to crystallize the radical sentiment in this country against the courts and other institutions of Capitalism than the sending of Berger to Congress."⁵¹

Warren's bravado combined with his marketing savvy did boost *Appeal* circulation in a campaign that was simultaneously a heroic stand for a free press and a shameless publicity stunt. The *Appeal* published at least eight hundred thousand copies of a "Jail and Gallows" edition in which Warren compared himself to lynched Illinois abolitionist editor Elijah Lovejoy.⁵² Warren's defense became his newspaper's biggest story, and his martyrdom a favored subject of *Appeal* cartoons.⁵³ A front-page item penned by Sinclair that warned, "If they can crush the *Appeal*, they can crush our whole propaganda," was accompanied by a form for readers to pledge another subscriber every week until his case was dismissed—five per week, should Warren be jailed.⁵⁴ The newspaper stayed on the offensive, including Shoaf's exposé of the federal prison at Leavenworth that accused an official of sodomizing a sixteen-year-old inmate. The story elicited another indictment on a charge of sending obscene material through the mail.⁵⁵

Other socialist newspapers showed solidarity and seemed unbothered by the *Appeal*'s big circulation gain. Radicals revered First Amendment ideals because they were vital to sustaining their social movement. The *Call* quoted Debs that Warren's prosecution marked "the climax of a long series of outrages perpetrated by the courts to muzzle the press and silence protest against corporation misrule."⁵⁶ Outrage over the Warren case marked one of the few times in which anarchist *Mother Earth* agreed with the yellow socialist *Call*.⁵⁷ *ISR* even urged readers to subscribe to the *Appeal*.⁵⁸ Kerr predicted *Appeal* circulation would zoom to a million if Warren served his six months. "He has put the Federal courts on trial before the working class of the United States," Kerr wrote.⁵⁹ *Progressive Woman* published a Shoaf account that blamed the case on a government conspiracy to suppress the *Appeal*.⁶⁰ *Wilshire's*, even as the *Appeal*'s circulation surged past its own, supported its competitor.⁶¹ Segments of the

popular press also expressed their appreciation, like *Cosmopolitan* magazine's left-leaning publisher John Walker, who personally thanked Warren for his freepress fight.⁶²

Sinclair proposed in the *Appeal* that if Warren was jailed, "there should be a series of public meetings in every city and town, and parades of protest larger than ever."⁶³ In late 1911, President Taft canceled the jail term and reduced the fine to \$100. Warren offered *Appeal* subscriptions, but the government never bothered to collect. The suit cost the *Appeal* some \$12,000, a huge sum at the time, which nearly crippled the newspaper.⁶⁴ Its battles were not over, however, and its fight for a free press was just one among many waged by radical periodicals when they attempted to report on labor's side of industrial warfare.

Persecution and Prison

Jail was a routine risk for radical journalists. The experience of a twenty-four-year-old machinist turned strike-bulletin editor illustrated the perils they faced when they challenged corporate powers. When, in 1914, the Illinois Central Railroad Company threatened the jobs of thirty-five thousand workers who had been fighting nearly three years for the right to organize, Carl Person obtained a used typewriter to report on the ensuing strike. "He girded himself with a shotgun called Publicity and pulled the trigger with the forefinger of organization," wrote Floyd Gibbons, later famous for World War I reportage that cost him an eye. The bulletin marked another exercise in participatory journalism. "Every one of the 35,000 strikers was a reporter, a photographer and an agent for the *Strike Bulletin*," Gibbons stated. A thirty-two-page Graveyard Special edition documented violence against strikers. Person was beaten after another exposé but went back to work. Railroad detectives and U.S. marshals raided his makeshift office and charged him with several federal counts related to "reflecting injuriously" on the railroad. Out on bail, Person shot an assailant in self-defense, according to Gibbons, and was indicted for murder. Once out on bond, after five months in jail, the editor returned to his typewriter. As did so many strike stories, Person's ended with an appeal for funds.⁶⁵

In Pennsylvania, authorities charged three editors of the weekly *Free Press* with seditious libel during a 1910 strike in New Castle. Although the federal Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 that criminalized criticism of the government had expired a century earlier, seditious libel remained a crime in many states. It proved an effective way to suppress the press. *ISR* deemed the *Free Press* trial

critical because of its First Amendment implications. A guilty verdict would mean “the editors of any Socialist periodical could be ha[u]lled into court on a trumped up charge of sedition and jailed, thus stifling freedom of the press.”⁶⁶ When the judge declared a mistrial, fifteen thousand people marched to a celebratory rally.⁶⁷ In California, the socialist *San Diego Herald* editor told a more horrific tale of extralegal persecution. A citizens committee kidnapped A. R. Sauer in 1912 because his newspaper attacked police brutality against IWW organizers. His “crime” was publishing affidavits by Wobblies detailing attacks on them. “We were no sooner on the road than the kidnappers began to talk about hanging me to a bridge,” the editor recalled. They dumped him in Escondido instead and threatened to kill him if he returned to San Diego.⁶⁸ When Sauer did, vigilantes sacked his office.⁶⁹

Young Alexander Scott, editor of socialist *Weekly Issue* in New Jersey, received a one-to-fifteen-year sentence for his editorials decrying police violence during the 1913 Paterson silk mill workers’ strike. He was convicted of promoting “subversion and destruction of or hostility or opposition to any or all government” under the state’s antianarchy act. Police confiscated all five thousand copies of its strike edition because an editorial called police “brutal strike breakers” and “lawless anarchists” on the mill owners’ payroll. When Scott turned himself in after speaking to a strike rally of seven thousand people, nearly half of the crowd trailed him to the police station while they hooted the police, who attacked them. Police arrested people just for holding a copy of the newspaper issue.⁷⁰ Partly thanks to the *Call*’s financial and editorial support, the New Jersey Supreme Court threw out his conviction in 1914 but upheld the statute.⁷¹

A front-page cartoon that year lampooning evangelical preacher Billy Sunday landed the socialist monthly *Melting Pot* in a St. Louis court. It illustrated a long piece by irreligious editor Henry Tichenor, who also edited the *National Rip-Saw*, which raked Sunday’s capitalist ties.⁷² Tichenor’s journalism has been likened to “the style, if not the quality, of Henry L. Mencken” by scholar Irvin Wyllie: “Like Mencken he was strong on the attack, a mortal enemy of Puritanism, superstition, and quacks.”⁷³ A grand jury indicted Tichenor and publisher Phil Wagner, who also owned the much larger *Rip-Saw*, on charges of circulating defamatory and scurrilous literature through the mail. Columnist Kate Richards O’Hare wryly declared it impossible to libel the flamboyant preacher, but the suit was no joke. The pair faced up to thirty-five years in prison. Conviction could bankrupt Wagner and close both the *Melting*

Pot and the *Rip-Saw*.⁷⁴ As in the Warren case, the offending Billy Sunday cartoon was illegal because it appeared on the outside cover of the mailed material. Like Warren, Tichenor and others used their press to defend themselves. The *Melting Pot* published a satirical cartoon from the front page of the *Catholic Tribune* to demonstrate that prosecutors were singling out radical periodicals for prosecution. A judge dismissed the case after fining each \$100.⁷⁵

Covering Labor's Side of the West Virginia Mine Wars

One of the most blatant violations of the right to a free press occurred amid the bloody West Virginia mine wars in which at least fifty people died in 1912–13. After the state declared martial law in the valley between Paint and Cabin creeks, it charged fifty-one miners with conspiracy to murder. The military also locked up socialist C. H. Boswell, editor of the *Labor Argus* in Charleston. It did not immediately shutter the newspaper, but a sentry stood guard over W. H. Thompson, editor of the *Socialist and Labor Star* in nearby Huntington, when he filled in for Boswell.⁷⁶ Authorities shut the *Star* down and jailed him in May.⁷⁷ As a precaution, Thompson had moved the *Star*'s Huntington operations, hauling an ancient flatbed press and trays of old mismatched hand-type up to an old house on a hill. He designated former *ISR* illustrator Ralph Chaplin as honorary *Star* associate editor. The young artist had left Chicago to work at a Huntington portrait studio, but as reports of manhandling by mine guards increased, he began soapboxing for the strike committee. He helped raise funds to buy shoes for miners' barefoot children with Mother Jones, who arrived toting in a handbag her trademark wardrobe of a shiny black dress frilled with lace at the throat. *Appeal to Reason* became a vocal ally of the suppressed *Argus*. Besides mailing the *Appeal* to the West Virginia newspaper's subscription list free of charge, Warren telegraphed a protest to the governor and flooded the county with the *Appeal*, currently running an investigative series by the audacious John Kenneth Turner excoriating the state's mistreatment of miners.⁷⁸

Turner had recently gained fame as author of *Barbarous Mexico*, a 1911 exposé of President Porfirio Díaz's atrocities against his people. The onetime printer's apprentice published his own California weekly newspaper by age seventeen, and worked as a broncbuster, day laborer, ranch cook, and teacher before joining forces with the *Appeal* in 1910.⁷⁹ Shoaf, ironically, considering his own penchant for exaggeration, described Turner as "imaginative and too much inclined to color the facts."⁸⁰ Turner once explained how he emphasized

the “human, individual note” to draw readers into stories: “Leave the reader at the end with all the facts that he could get out of a dry article but leave him stirred up as no cold facts alone could stir him.”⁸¹ True to form, Turner slipped into coal country masquerading as a New York magazine writer. He plied mine guards and militia officers with liquor to get the story.⁸² “I have figured in exciting episodes,” the *Appeal* quoted Turner in a barrage of plugs for the upcoming series (although not enough to satisfy the reporter).⁸³ Turner claimed his life was endangered, although it is difficult to determine how credible were his fears, since he often exaggerated risks. “I was spotted and followed before I had been off the train five minutes,” he wrote Warren from Charleston. “I may have to kill a man yet.”⁸⁴ Once out of West Virginia, he claimed mine owners’ agents blackjacked him. His letters to his editor indicate Turner’s pro-union agenda inclined him to color his coverage. Although he found the union leaders weak, he warned Warren, “Of course, we can’t touch that end of it in our story.”⁸⁵

Turner suggested Warren pin West Virginia coverage on a campaign for the release of Mother Jones.⁸⁶ The military was holding her incommunicado on charges she stole a machine gun that had been used to mow down strikers. Jones was as beloved by miners as she was loathed by officials. Born in Cork, Ireland, around 1837, the former dressmaker turned to labor agitation after a yellow-fever epidemic killed her husband and four children in 1867.⁸⁷ Journalists framed her as a grandmotherly hell-raiser, and she capitalized on her persona of militant motherhood.⁸⁸ *Everyman* magazine described her as “John Brown in petticoats.”⁸⁹ Her flair for publicity included a Children’s Crusade in 1903 in which she marched seventy-five child miners from Pennsylvania to Roosevelt’s home in New York. The president declined to meet them, but the stunt helped spur the movement that barred child labor a decade later.⁹⁰

Mother Jones’s age and gender enhanced her appeal because she contradicted the stereotype of burly male miners. Debs appealed to West Virginians’ manhood to strike in demand for her release.⁹¹ Gender also informed his likening of her to a warrior: “This brave woman has fought the battles of the oppressed with a heroism more exalted than ever sustained a soldier upon the field of knowledge.”⁹² Arguably, no woman appeared more often in radical press imagery. *ISR*’s January 1913 cover featured a photograph of her alongside a child in West Virginia captioned, “New Shoes for the Striking Coal Miners’ Children.”⁹³ A cartoon the next year showed her facing down a bayonet-bearing cavalry in Colorado’s volatile coal fields.⁹⁴ Chaplin, under the pseudonym “A

Paint Creek Miner,” wrote a poem about her for *ISR*.⁹⁵ The *Appeal* called her a “tower of strength” in West Virginia.⁹⁶ The miners urged Jones to accept military demands she leave the state as a condition for her release, according to Turner, who visited her twice. “But she told them to go to hell.”⁹⁷ The *Appeal* published a front-page photograph of the pair at Cabin Creek.⁹⁸ The newspaper took credit when the military finally released Jones after nearly four months in solitary confinement, editorializing, “It shows clearly that one of the strongest weapons in the hands of the workers is publicity through the Socialist press.”⁹⁹ Warren declined Turner’s suggestion, however, that the newspaper call for miners to “arm themselves to restore constitutional government in West Virginia.”¹⁰⁰

The valley’s labor turmoil also embroiled the Greenwich Village-based intellectual socialist journal the *Masses*. It charged the Associated Press “Truth trust” with deliberately suppressing news about the violence in an editorial accompanied by Art Young’s cartoon, *Poisoned at the Source*, which portrayed a man pouring “Lies” into the well of public opinion.¹⁰¹ Both Young and editor Max Eastman were indicted under criminal libel charges filed in New York City on the grounds the figure defamed AP president Frank Noyes. The pair faced up to a year in jail and \$1000 fines. “The hope of democratic civilization lies in the dissemination of true knowledge,” associate editor Floyd Dell protested in the journal’s defense. “A criticism of the Associated Press is a criticism of the very heart of the hope of progress for mankind in America.”¹⁰² In contrast, the *New York Times*’s editorial stance defended the hegemonic interests: It castigated the *Masses*’s accusations as “glaring falsehoods and owlish stupidities” undeserving of First Amendment protection. After the case languished for two years, the district attorney dropped it.¹⁰³

Chaplin said violence he witnessed against the miners withered any journalistic inclination to be “objective and ‘constructive.’” He editorialized for “direct action” to free a jailed strike leader, and strikers recited his vitriolic sonnet, “Mine Guard.” The county exploded when guards in an armored train fired upon a homeless strikers’ tent colony in the dead of night, allegedly in retaliation for the murder of two mine guards, who supposedly kicked a pregnant woman to death. “Vengeance stalked the green valleys of West Virginia,” Chaplin recalled.¹⁰⁴ Authorities rounded up seventy-five miners, locked them in bullpens, and charged them with murder, for which they would be tried in secret military court. Chaplin rushed to the tent colony clutching a notebook and Kodak camera to report for *ISR*. He and a colleague bluffed their way past soldiers at Cabin Creek to get within view of Jones haranguing her captors.

Hundreds of shootouts erupted between armed miners and soldiers stationed all over. Rumors of violence on both sides grew more embellished—for example, a tale that strikers decapitated mine guards and posted their heads on fence posts.

Chaplin likened the miners to the minutemen, patriotic iconography that underlined radicals' claim they were the legitimate heirs of the highly mythologized American Revolution heroes' direct action against tyranny. "Back of it all," wrote Chaplin of the strike, "was a bitterness born of living in company shacks on company property, of using company scrip at company stores, of being baptized and married in a company church, and of being buried in a company graveyard." Chaplin escaped the lethal valley to write his article, but when he returned to Huntington he received word of an imminent raid on the *Labor Star*. A pack of mountain men delivered a wagonload of firearms and barricaded the doors and windows with type cases. "We'll show 'em that they can't stomp out free speech in these hills," grumbled one old man.¹⁰⁵ No raid occurred that night, but on May 9, militiamen ransacked the plant and chucked all stock paper, type, and equipment into the swollen Ohio River. A more militant Chaplin left for Cleveland, where he embraced the IWW's direct-action agenda and began working for *Solidarity*, the Wobblies' official eastern journal.

The *Appeal*'s Turner headed west, where he witnessed West Virginia's state-sanctioned violence replicated in the southern Colorado mine fields owned by corporations that John D. Rockefeller Sr. controlled. More than seventy-five people died in an unsuccessful strike to gain the right to unionize, most by gunshot, between fall 1913 and April 1914. *ISR* accounts in December 1913 discussed the National Guard's "brute force" and Gatling guns trained on striking miners' camps; *ISR* claimed 147 bullet holes pierced a single tent.¹⁰⁶ When Turner arrived in March, he described the armed guards' menace in inimitable *Appeal* fashion: "A coward at heart, the Colorado militiaman, drunk or sober, can do nothing and say nothing without a hand on his revolver." Turner also was skilled in the tools of conventional reportage, and he quoted official affidavits in which women charged the militia with sexual harassment and attempted rape. A miner's wife related, "Two soldiers grabbed me by the breast and tore open my dress."¹⁰⁷

The violence culminated in the Ludlow Massacre on April 20, 1914, when two women and eleven children who sought shelter in a bunker beneath a tent suffocated after the National Guard torched the strikers' tent colony. The discovery of their charred bodies ignited ten days of rampage that came the closest to industrial war America ever has experienced.¹⁰⁸ The tragedy even mobilized the mainstream press, whose cartoonists joined the radicals in

portraying Rockefeller as evil incarnate.¹⁰⁹ John Sloan produced the massacre's most indelible image for the *Masses*: in his atypically coarse grease-pencil rendering, a miner fires a pistol at an unseen enemy, with the burnt corpse of a little girl draped over his other arm.¹¹⁰ The drawing telegraphed the artist's unapologetic endorsement of armed self-defense.

Radicals' Alternative Visual Rhetoric

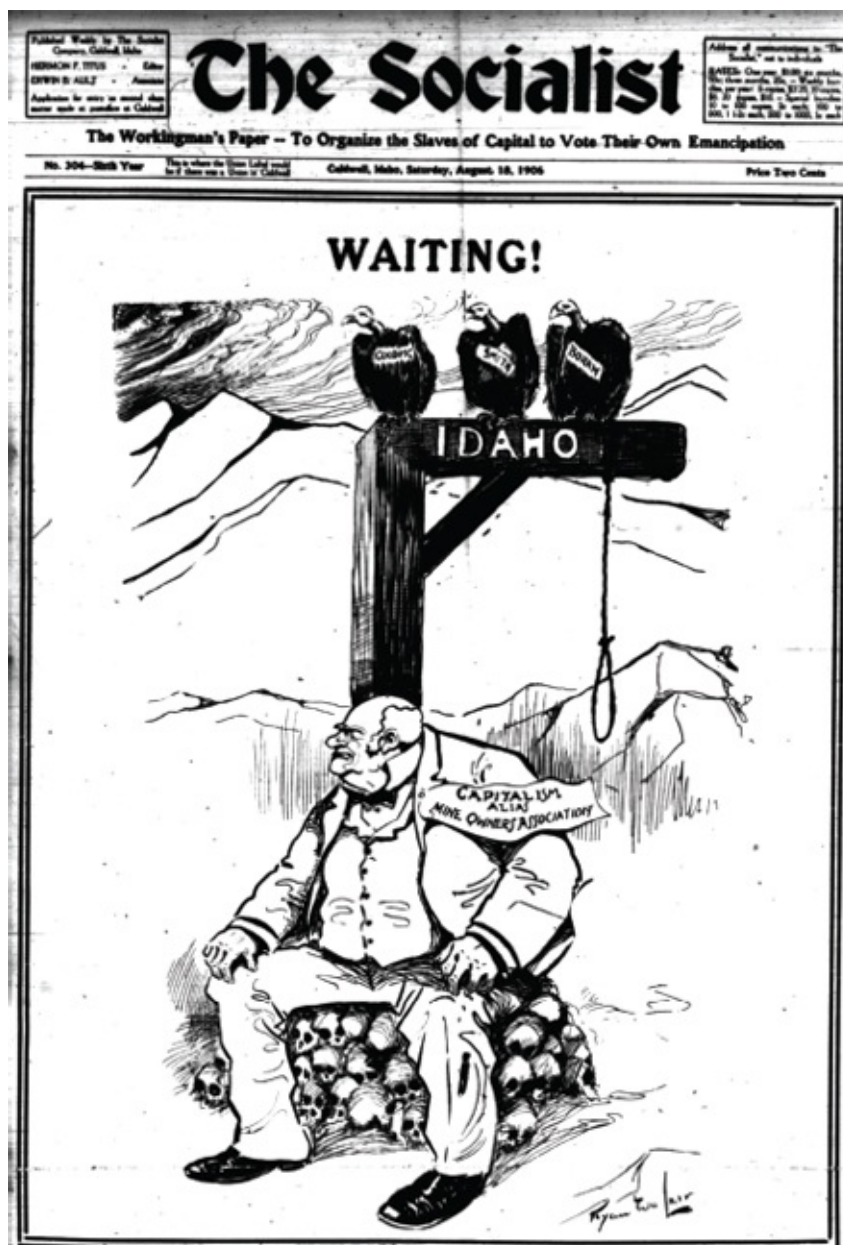
The image epitomizes the power of visual rhetoric, which aims to persuade through a combination of imagery mediated by text. Sloan's iconic image is perhaps the most significant of the radical cartoons that functioned to nurture group identity and mobilize collective action. Leslie Fishbein asserts that radical artists' visual rhetoric comprised "a new genre of politically conscious art intended as a weapon in the class struggle."¹¹¹ Cartoon historians Steven Hess and Sandy Northrop note that artists sketching in tiny, widely dispersed radical periodicals "were doing work generally well above the caliber seen in the popular press."¹¹² Michael Cohen credits the radical cartoonists with creating a "class politics of laughter."¹¹³ The dichotomized imagery compressed knotty Marxist theory into the visual equivalent of seven words: capitalism was the root of all evil. This telegraphic message served radicals well; it made their mission easily comprehensible to workers, many of whom spoke little or no English. The cartoonists' corpulent capitalist stood as a universal symbol for the vast, largely unseen economic forces redefining the American workplace.

Radical cartoonists could trace their subversive roots back to French painter Honoré Daumier (1808–1879), whose caricatures of King Louis-Philippe landed him in prison.¹¹⁴ Daumier influenced Thomas Nast (1840–1902), the first great American political cartoonist whose "Tammany Tiger" symbolized New York's corrupt Democratic Party. His 1871 crusade transformed Tammany's William "Boss" Tweed into a corpulent symbol of evil.¹¹⁵ Illustrated German satirical magazines such as *Simplicissimus* also influenced the German-dominated radical movement in nineteenth-century America and inspired German-born Joseph Kepple's *Puck*, a lushly illustrated satirical humor review.¹¹⁶ In the 1890s, Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst made illustrations a daily part of newspapers. By 1900, hundreds of political cartoonists were satirizing American society.¹¹⁷ Popular-press cartoons safely confined their social criticism to the ubiquitous trusts—an octopus served as metaphor—but rarely explored the

plight of the working class.¹¹⁸

Radical periodicals employed an alternative visual rhetoric. Untiringly didactic and perpetually optimistic, radical cartoons ranged from crude sketches to fine art. They enlisted symbolism, stereotypes, satire, juxtaposition, inversion, metaphor, and irony to stir emotions. As *Call* publishers boasted, “Its cartoons are as purposeful as they are trenchant with wit and humor.”¹¹⁹ A *Rip-Saw* cover, for example, juxtaposed an outsized devil overseeing the tiny masses in a hellish scenario worthy of Hieronymus Bosch.¹²⁰ Radicals conversely juxtaposed size to empower workers. To make the point that the working class was stronger than the capitalist class, the capitalist in a 1903 *Appeal to Reason* cartoon only reached the ankle of the burly, bare-armed worker—another stock image.¹²¹ Ryan Walker’s comic strip series, *Henry Dubb*, relied on another stereotype.¹²² The hapless worker ignorant of socialism was so popular Walker took the character on tour. In 1905, Warren arranged forty dates between Kansas and New York in which Walker sketched Dubb in scenarios discussed by a traveling partner.¹²³

Walker’s work enlivened the *New York Times*, *Mail*, *Express*, *Puck*, *Life*, and *Judge* before he heard Debs and converted to socialism. “His uncanny power for seizing the spirit of things and impaling it upon the moving line places him among the great cartoonists of the world,” bragged the *Call*, which periodically employed Walker’s talents. “A very great tenderness for the unhappy and the suffering and a great love for humanity fill his soul.” Reform publisher William Marion Reedy called him “The Art Evangel of Socialism.”¹²⁴ Walker’s cartoon of a corpulent capitalist awaiting Haywood at a hangman’s noose in the run-up to the Steunenberg trial filled the entire front page of the *Socialist*, which used so many illustrations in its early years that publisher Titus initially billed it as a “cartoon weekly.”¹²⁵ Walker believed most socialist papers too type-heavy. He wrote an editor, “A page of cartoons, occasionally, if necessary—whether by me or some on else—lends a new dress to the *Appeal*—and I know that *cartoons* are popular. Especially from the socialist point of view.”¹²⁶ Walker, however, declined Warren’s 1914 offer of \$40 to work full time for the *Appeal*.¹²⁷ He continued to send cartoons from the bungalow he and his wife, Maud, mostly made themselves in New Jersey’s Orange Mountains.¹²⁸



Ryan Walker's cartoon, *Waiting!*, illustrates the class divisions the Haywood trial symbolized for many workers. *Socialist*, August 18, 1906.

Unlike those of the humorous Walker, Robert Minor's (1884–1952) cartoons hit like a hammer. The hugely successful *New York World* illustrator donated his fiercely anticapitalist images to radical journals such as the *Call*, *Blast*, *Masses*, and *Mother Earth* in the 1910s.¹²⁹ Minor made a revolutionary impact on his profession in his first job at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* when he switched from pen and ink to a thick grease pencil on textured paper.¹³⁰ Its thick, dark lines simplified drawings because they could not render detail. Minor explained the lack of “affectation in style” forced attention to the idea behind a drawing.¹³¹ An

example is his stark 1916 *Masses* grease-pencil drawing of a Cossack-clad guard bayoneting a striker in Pittsburgh.¹³² The “art-spokesman of humanity” drew pictures “with a prehistoric man’s war club,” as the *Rip-Saw* put it. “He smashed them onto the paper.”¹³³ The rough naturalistic look of grease-pencil artists became the signature style of the social realists’ working-class portrayals. Socially conscious grease pencil cartoons, left-leaning commercial cartoonist Rollin Kirby claimed, “imply an audience of more mature thought than do those of the cheery bucolic nature which abound in this country’s press.”¹³⁴ Their simple, direct style challenged frivolous popular magazine art that *Masses* editor Eastman dismissed as “monotonous.”¹³⁵

Symbolism was the commonest technique for telegraphing radical thought. The pro-politics *Call*, for example, portrayed the socialist vote a fist smashing the head of “Capitalism.”¹³⁶ A hog devouring small business symbolized capitalism in an *Appeal* cartoon.¹³⁷ Another *Appeal* cartoon inverted patriotic symbolism when it depicted three aproned workers playing the fife and drums as in the iconic Revolutionary War motif.¹³⁸ Instead of the Stars and Stripes, they hoist a red banner, the universal socialist symbol that connected a far-flung imagined community of radicals.¹³⁹ The U.S. flag usually served as satirical code, as in an *ISR* cartoon criticizing the government’s alleged abandonment of democratic principles.¹⁴⁰ Radical cartoonists also appropriated the potent symbol of crucifixion, as in a 1908 *Call* cartoon that showed a child laborer nailed to a cross.¹⁴¹ Besides imagery, text played a key role in framing the illustrations’ subversive messages. F. M. Dowell, in the blasphemous *National Rip-Saw*, for example, relied on wordplay in a caption when he likened a minister “Praying in Church” to a capitalist “Preying in the Factory.”¹⁴²



Robert Minor's grease pencil conveyed the brutality of the labor wars. *Pittsburgh, Masses* 9 (August 1916).

The often graphic, angry cartoons of the radical press remain testimony to the many violent confrontations between labor and employers throughout the 1910s. The *Call*, for example, illustrated Lower East Side garment workers' solidarity against "The Boss" in 1913.¹⁴³ The *Masses*'s Young displayed his lighter touch in a cartoon of a miner giving "Capitalism" the bum's rush from a big Michigan strike in 1909.¹⁴⁴ *Bayonne!* a 1915 *Mother Earth* cover by Minor, featured a prototype of Minor's classic brainless *Perfect Soldier* in the muscle-bound brute who chokes a worker during the lethal New Jersey strike.¹⁴⁵

Sloan's Ludlow illustration is arguably the most powerful of the prewar radical press because it uses no text to mediate the message.¹⁴⁶ Neither does it rely on predictable symbolism. And its subject notably fights back: its visual rhetoric calls for resistance. The *Masses*'s Ludlow cover shows Sloan's growth as an artist as well as immortalizes a ruthless episode of American history. Others shared Sloan's wrath. *ISR* reprinted his cartoon on its June 1914 cover; inside, it devoted twenty-three pages, five articles, cartoons, and photographs to what it called "The Class War in Colorado." Editor Leslie Marcy's lead article ended with a message to John D. Rockefeller Jr., who had embarked on the first image makeover orchestrated by public relations pioneer Ivy Lee to reframe the family reputation: "In spite of your prostituted press, your fawning preachers and college professors, your subsidized judges and their laws, the war is on and will continue until the despised miner shall be master of the mine."¹⁴⁷ Ironically,

given the IWW's vastly overblown reputation for violence, its official organ, *Solidarity*, blamed the United Mine Workers for getting entangled in the violent standoff. *Solidarity* charged that its rival's failure to enlist workers in other industries in coordinated direct action assured the Colorado miners' defeat. "They are ISOLATED through the want of solidarity of their fellow workers," it stated. The charge reflected the Wobblies' plan for One Big Union of all workers. It also reiterated their claim that the IWW's call for direct action was nonviolent. "The power of guns is as nothing compared with the power to paralyze industry and stop the flow of profits."¹⁴⁸

Photographs Bear Witness

The Ludlow atrocities inspired radical periodicals to publish a new kind of visual rhetoric even more shocking than their cartoons. *ISR*'s June 1914 account of Ludlow included some of the earliest photographs of dead human beings to appear in mass media. Originally published in Cheyenne's *Wyoming Labor Journal*, one image showed the body of strike leader Louis Tikas, his face visible above a sheet that covered him from the neck down. Another showed a young boy neatly laid out as if ready for public viewing.¹⁴⁹ Their deaths held instrumental value for editors, who deployed the images to shock and mobilize, key functions of visual rhetoric. As Susan Sontag observes of war photographs, images of the dead create powerful visual rhetoric: "They reiterate. They simplify. They agitate."¹⁵⁰

Photography also documented police violence against workers. *ISR* reprinted a *Chicago Daily Socialist* front-page photograph that showed police pushing female garment workers during a strike in which one woman was killed.¹⁵¹ A thirty-two-page "Graveyard Special" edition of a 1914 *Strike Bulletin* was a "damning pictorial indictment" of violence against strikers by the Illinois Central Railroad Company, including photographs of the dead and wounded. "A skeptical public was not asked to believe the printed word of condemnation; it was confronted with photographic proof," Gibbons wrote in *ISR*.¹⁵²

The text-heavy magazine became an unlikely pioneer in magazine photojournalism when Kerr took over as editor in 1908. *ISR*'s photographs reflected its heightened graphic sensibilities as type grew taller, leading between lines wider, and white space more abundant. Some of its first photographs illustrated big crowds welcoming candidate Debs during his 1908 "Red Special" whistle-stop rail campaign at hundreds of stations in thirty-three states during the

sixty-five days leading up to election day.¹⁵³ Most imagery was more somber as the magazine used photography to document strikes or charges of industrial malfeasance.¹⁵⁴ For example, photographs documented tent cities that sprang up after a mining company evicted workers from their homes.¹⁵⁵ Lewis Hine's photographs accompanied Carrie Allen's alarming story in 1911 about child labor in cotton mills.¹⁵⁶ Another, on the effects of phosphorous poisoning in match factories, offered a grotesque photograph of a woman whose necrosis was destroying her teeth, gums, and jawbone.¹⁵⁷ *ISR* even took its images on the road. "For several years the *Review* has had its photographers in the thick of every strike and the class struggle in many lands," stated an ad for a stereopticon lecture, "The March of the Machine," in spring 1913. "We have gathered the best working class group of photographs in America."¹⁵⁸

Captions were integral to the photographic frames. For example, the propagandistic caption to a photograph of Bethlehem Steel workers' dilapidated housing read, "Welcome to All-Interior Slave Pen—Gary."¹⁵⁹ A photo of a bandaged worker was captioned "Beaten Up by Police" in an *ISR* account of a 1910 IWW free-speech fight in Spokane.¹⁶⁰ Captions created meaning for eight photographs that illustrated John Murray's highly readable narrative about a 1909 uprising among Mexican peasants, a portent of the Mexican Revolution that captured the American radical imagination over the following decade. For example, one caption beneath a photograph of a shirtless man carting a big basket read: "A 'contract laborer': In Mexico you can buy more labor for less money than any place in the world." Another, captioned "Old Age and Poverty," went on: "The Mexican peon has no hope of ever owning a foot of land or saving a centavo." It appeared below the photo of a white-bearded man holding a cane in his hand and a bundle on his back.¹⁶¹

Conclusion

Socialist and other radical journals enlisted verbal and visual rhetoric to tell labor's side of what can only be called the American labor wars. Socialist journals functioned to provide much-needed voice for workers in their accounts of the Haywood trial, the West Virginia coal mine wars, the Ludlow Massacre, and countless other conflicts. They countered hostile media hegemony that largely framed labor as a mob. Illustrations by Sloan, Minor, and Walker added a visceral charge to the socialist press mission to forge group identity and mobilize

collective action. Hyperbole and outrage characterized the socialist press challenge to political and economic hegemony that sanctioned corporate violence. Old-fashioned American hucksterism may have informed the *Appeal*'s campaign to free Haywood, but the newspaper never backed down from its fight for basic American constitutional rights, such as a free press. The lengths to which the U.S. government went to silence the *Appeal*—along with the barrage of varied forms of harassment other radical journals faced—are indicative of how threatening authorities found their message.

Radical press pages may ring shrill, but they indicate how difficult it was for workers to be heard in an information environment dominated by the corporate behemoths, almost always with federal and state governments at their backs. Only the most egregious violence, like the Ludlow Massacre, stirred mainstream media. The *Appeal*'s claim it saved Haywood's neck has merit. Not even the outbreak of war in Europe in August 1914 alarmed socialist journals as much as the domestic industrial conflicts. "*The war is here!*" cried a banner note across the *Appeal*'s front page. "If John D. Rockefeller succeeds in conquering his rebel slaves his next step will be to subjugate the workers in every state of the union."¹⁶² By the end of August, when most of the mainstream press focused on Europe, *Appeal* headlines screamed, "CIVIL WAR IS THREATENED IN AMERICA."¹⁶³ And that was on page two. All-out civil war never erupted, perhaps in part because some reforms satisfied labor and moguls like the Rockefellers adopted the new panacea of public relations. Hard-won labor rights remain tenuous, however, as evidenced by nationwide protests in 2011 in support of Wisconsin state workers when the legislature abolished their right to collective bargaining.¹⁶⁴

Unfortunately for socialist newspapers and their publishers in the 1910s, too many of their wars were with each other, draining energy from crusades to empower workers and campaigns to elect socialists. Militants charged the *Milwaukee Leader* and New York's *Call* were the products of political machines that had sold out to reactionary trade unions. Gradualists grumbled the *Appeal* was shrill, *ISR* too militant. A number of struggling socialist publishers increasingly resented the *Appeal*'s circulation boom. Critics began to reconsider the Socialist policy forbidding a party newspaper. In the midst of this tumult, the *Appeal* began investigating another bombing that would blow up in its face.

CHAPTER FOUR

CACOPHONY

FROM A “ONE-HOSS BOSS” TO A PARTY BOSS IN THE SOCIALIST PRESS

A privately owned socialist press is an anomaly.

FRANCIS M. ELLIOTT, report, “A Party Owned Press”

■ On the afternoon of August 13, 1911, George Shoaf took a break from investigating a sensational labor case in Los Angeles. The reporter believed he was about to “spring the biggest sensation of the whole case”—the identity of the person who left a suitcase stuffed with dynamite in an alley behind the *Los Angeles Times* building the previous October. The resulting explosion killing twenty-one workers.¹ Shoaf dropped by a party, then went to visit his cousin Lucy Borman at her boardinghouse until close to midnight. After he left, she heard a loud thud on the stairway. The next morning, another boarder found a fourteen-inch pipe and a hat with Shoaf’s name inscribed inside at the bottom of the steps. The reporter had disappeared.

“SHOAF IS SLUGGED!” shrieked the *Appeal to Reason*’s August 26 front page. The newspaper speculated “sluggers” hired by union-busting *Times* owner Harrison Gray Otis had murdered Shoaf.² The next week’s edition revealed Shoaf had been investigating claims that Otis set the explosion to frame the union.³ Editor Fred Warren dispatched Shoaf’s father, a fabled Texas detective, to find clues to his son’s fate, and the newspaper offered \$500 for information. Readers also donated funds as the mystery deepened.⁴ On October 14, the *Appeal* reported Shoaf was a captive on a yacht en route from Nicaragua to a South Pacific island.⁵

■ ■ ■

The truth proved nearly as bizarre. The incident illuminates the pitfalls of the

personal, advocacy journalism epitomized by the forceful trio of reporter Shoaf, editor Warren, and publisher Julius Wayland. This episode of journalism history raises larger questions about the lines between advocacy and propaganda and the risks and limits of journalistic activism. It helps explain why one avid *Appeal* reader said in 1912, “It is the most loved and worst hated publication on the face of the earth today.”⁶ The *Appeal*’s missteps also highlight its failure to fulfill some social movement media functions despite its huge circulation. This chapter will examine how the newspaper’s self-defeating blunders in what became known as the “McNamara case” exacerbated a split in the Socialist Party of America. Its outsized circulation coupled with Wayland’s contrarian nature made the *Appeal* the main target of a campaign to abandon the Socialist ban on a party organ. The Shoaf scandal highlights questions about how much control a social movement needs over its media. For all its influence, instead of forging community in the radical movement, the *Appeal*’s self-interest and duplicity ultimately contributed to splintering it.

The *Appeal* and the McNamara Brothers

The *Times* bombing initially looked like a replay of the 1907 William Haywood trial, a connection the *Appeal* was only all too happy to exploit. In a blistering front-page editorial, Eugene Debs blamed the blast on publisher Otis, charging him and the rest of the capitalist press with attempting to frame labor for the “crushing odium of the crime.”⁷ In April, police indeed charged three union men; they even extradited them to Los Angeles, using dubious tactics that conjured Haywood’s arrest. Ortie McManigal and brothers J. B. McNamara and John McNamara belonged to the International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, an affiliate of the AFL. McManigal soon confessed and implicated the brothers, who maintained their innocence. The radical press rallied around them, in another awkward alliance with AFL leader Samuel Gompers, who again hired Clarence Darrow as lawyer for the defense.⁸ The parallels to the Haywood case both alarmed and excited the radical press.

The Industrial Workers of the World’s *Solidarity* wondered on page one if prosecutors would produce “another Harry Orchard,” a reference to the dubious witness against Haywood.⁹ It called for a nationwide general strike—a frequent, if unheeded, appeal for the apotheosis of the Wobblies’ direct-action agenda.¹⁰ Socialist publishers sensed a killing in the works, both literally and financially. The *Chicago Daily Socialist* announced, “We feel that there is a burning

necessity of spreading the truth in this case—that it will play such an important part in saving McNamara from the gallows, that we make a special offer of three months for fifty cents to your members.”¹¹ The *Call* published a graphic cartoon of capitalist news barons and merchants branding “LIES” onto McNamara’s chest.¹² Some *Call* readers, however, still complained the moderate daily ignored the McNamaras, a harbinger of the impending split in the Socialist Party.¹³ One reader charged, “*The Call* suppresses the news, ostrich fashioned.”¹⁴

No one could say that of the *Appeal*, which channeled the Haywood acquittal throughout 1911. Debs referenced his defiant 1906 “Arouse Ye Slaves” essay in an article about the McNamaras that exclaimed, “Arouse ye Workingmen!”¹⁵ By September, Debs seemed out of touch with reality in his calls for a “few men not afraid to die” for the McNamaras’ defense.¹⁶ The May 13, 1911, *Appeal*’s front-page banner headline, “The Second Great Kidnapping Case,” likewise referenced the Haywood case.¹⁷ Shoaf raced to Los Angeles where, as he had in Idaho, he charged officials with railroading the defendants to the gallows. He informed readers that any doubt of their innocence was “dispelled the moment I looked into the clear blue eyes of the McNamara boys.”¹⁸ Another article reminded readers that in 1906 anonymous *Appeal* tipsters had revealed Haywood would be acquitted; in the McNamara case, it claimed, the newspaper’s stellar sources had unearthed a conspiracy. “The *Appeal* has sources of information that reach to the innermost circles of capitalism,” it claimed. The article typified the *Appeal* tactic of publishing tantalizing blurbs advertising future scoops cloaked as straight news. It ended, “Don’t ask for details and explanations. Watch the *Appeal* and follow its lead!”¹⁹ In July, the *Appeal* charged that an Otis agent planted the dynamite.²⁰ Soon after, Shoaf vanished.

The McNamara case really blew up in the radical press after a second figurative bomb detonated at the end of 1911, when the McNamaras confessed. The affair discredited the entire labor movement and permanently alienated the AFL’s Gompers from all socialists. Most radical periodicals tried to transform the shocking confession into a condemnation of their foes. “I absolutely refuse to join in the capitalist clamor and craft union clique of denunciation of these condemned unionists,” Debs wrote in the *ISR*.²¹ In the *Appeal*, he described the brothers as unwitting “tools of capitalism,” masking his rising doubts about the consequences of extreme forms of direct action. Most of the radical press followed Debs’s lead but decried the McNamaras’ use of violence.²² A front-page *Call* editorial charged, “Capitalism has not only killed members of the working class, but it has done its best to turn others into murderers.”²³ Anarchist

Mother Earth, a proponent of direct action, proclaimed the McNamaras “truly the *martyrs of labor*.”²⁴ It labeled as fools the trade unionists and moderate socialists willing to work within the capitalist system who failed to recognize the brothers as “victims of a bitter, relentless, and inexorable social war.”²⁵ The IWW weeklies *Industrial Worker* and *Solidarity* likewise refused to denounce the brothers, but the Wobblies’ vocal proponents of direct action, including sabotage, disassociated themselves from the trade unionists’ lethal tactics. “We are no more in favor of killing by labor union members than we are in having people killed by the thousands daily by the capitalist class,” *IW* stated. The weekly even declared the McNamaras guilty of a crime against the working class: “They hurt our ethics and interest.”²⁶ The 1911 editorial was more prescient than its author realized, as the public conflation of IWW direct action with bombs portended the relentless persecution of Wobblies.

Shoaf Scandal Ripples through the Socialist Press

The McNamaras’ confession was especially awkward for the *Appeal to Reason*. Editors discovered in September that Shoaf was hiding on his own volition. Years later, he wrote that he took off under an assumed name after Darrow informed him the McNamaras would confess, forcing upon Shoaf the humiliation of retracting his conspiracy stories.²⁷ He neglected to mention that his *Appeal* bosses had discovered he had been living with the seventeen-year-old daughter of socialist journalist Ernest Untermann, a former *Appeal* associate editor. Their informant was Piet Vlag, current editor of the *Masses*, who produced letters between Elsa Untermann and her confidante Josephine Conger-Kaneko, publisher of *Progressive Woman*, in which the teenager had described her affair and mused about free love.²⁸ “S. is not dead,” Conger-Kaneko confirmed for Warren. She persuaded him not to expose the Shoaf scandal, because it “would be bad for the working class movement.” She conceded, “But it does seem as if the whole labor and socialist movement is honeycombed with rottenness.” She believed Shoaf had disappeared in the McNamaras’ best interest. “The woman in the case is only an incident—as there must be a woman in everything S. does.”²⁹

Shoaf’s amours were legendary. He had left his wife, Sallie, and three children for years at a time while he pursued his dual career in agitation and journalism. At the *Chicago American*, he once slept with a woman to obtain a photograph of a society divorcée.³⁰ During the Haywood trial, he made

headlines as the nexus of a sordid triangle with *Montana News* editor Ida Crouch-Hazlett and a fifteen-year-old girl. Authorities charged him with statutory rape after Crouch-Hazlett reported Shoaf's relationship with Florence Abbott, who roomed at the same Boise boardinghouse as Shoaf, Sallie, and their youngest son. During the trial Abbott acknowledged she engaged in "illegitimate relations" with Shoaf, but in October she repudiated her statement. The girl charged that Crouch-Hazlett made up the charges against Shoaf out of jealousy: "When she thought she saw him slipping from her affections she deliberately manufactured the story that was calculated to place him in the hands of his enemies."³¹

Exposure of Shoaf's 1911 romance with Elsa Untermann held far more serious ramifications than embarrassment for the reporter. The accusatory letters exchanged among the socialist journalists indicate Shoaf and the *Appeal* had known Haywood and his codefendants were guilty in the Steunenberg case. Historian J. Anthony Lukas points to passages in the letters as evidence the newspaper's public silence on Shoaf's affair stemmed from a desire to keep secret its compromising activities during the Haywood trial.³² Ernest Untermann charged that Shoaf ran around Boise "telling everybody that the boys had confessed to him that they were guilty and that we ought to set the town afire and raise hell, because we oughtn't let the thing come to trial."³³ Comments by Conger-Kaneko, whom Shoaf visited in Chicago during the Haywood trial, add merit to the distraught father's accusation. "If the capitalist press will give their columns to S. [Shoaf] to tell the truth about the Western Federation men, the McNamara bros., and whatever else he may know of the working-class movement—but these two are sufficient—it seems to me it would disgust hundreds of thousands of people with this movement," she wrote Warren. She also referred to a "frame-up about the evidence" in the McNamara case that Shoaf intended as a "last resort" to save the brothers.³⁴ Elsa Untermann had also written of Shoaf, "I know of things perfectly heinous that he has done in his work, things that he loathed."³⁵

Meanwhile, letters from a "Cornelius C. Corker," who surely was Shoaf, began arriving at the *Appeal* and criticizing it for botching the Shoaf kidnapping story. The McNamaras' "desperate situation" necessitated desperate measures, Corker wrote. Had the *Appeal* played along instead of searching for Shoaf, Warren would have been provided a "tangible and believable story" that *Times* owner Otis hired two men to kidnap the reporter. Instead, Corker charged Shoaf was treated as "the big liar and thief and rape-fiend."

He continued cryptically: "But remember that the McNamara brothers are

not one bit more guilty of the crime charged against them than were Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone of the crime of which they were acquitted. Trickery and audacity liberated the miners' officials; similar and bolder tactics could release the McNamara boys."³⁶ In his detailed complaint about Shoaf to the Socialist Party National Executive Committee, Ernest Untermann charged the *Appeal* was keeping the affair quiet not to protect the Socialist Party but to protect itself from an investigation of its "shady operations with Shoaf" for its "own private glory and financial advancement."³⁷ According to Conger-Kaneko, the *Appeal* was lucky Elsa could serve as the scapegoat. She concluded, "And if S. can never come back and show his real reason, and all the rest of it, the A. [*Appeal*] will be safe enough, and the movement will not suffer the blow it otherwise would."³⁸ The cryptic nature of these letters leave to conjecture whether Shoaf and the *Appeal* acted unethically or even criminally to avoid convictions of Haywood or the McNamaras. The implications for American radicalism were far-reaching, not the least of them the role of its press. Had Haywood been convicted in 1907, the trajectory of the American labor movement would have taken an entirely different path.

The party and Warren ignored Untermann's demands that they put Shoaf "where he can do no more harm to the movement and to little girls."³⁹ But Shoaf's *Appeal* career was over. The Shoafs divorced, and he soon married the local Socialist Party secretary in Los Angeles, where he became an optometrist and colluded in fraud with city doctors.⁴⁰ Gossip about Shoaf and the newspaper's gaffe continued to swirl through the movement.⁴¹ Wayland's woes increased when the financial drain caused by Warren's legal fees in his post-office challenge forced him to join the long line of desperate radical publishers who on their front pages begged readers for funds.⁴² Cartoonist Ryan Walker was not alone when he lamented of the *Appeal*, "The whole tone of thought has shifted greatly in the last few years."⁴³

A Chaotic Socialist Press during the Presidential Campaign

Such was the chaotic state of the socialist press going into the 1912 election year. The McNamara brothers' confession dealt a staggering blow to both the radical and labor movements. It cost Socialists the 1912 Los Angeles municipal elections, according to historian Howard Quint, who believed Socialist lawyer Job Harriman probably would have been elected mayor if not for the mistaken

association between socialism and the McNamaras in the public mind.⁴⁴ Amazingly, given the acrimony raging between the Socialists' right and left factions, the party temporarily cast aside its differences to campaign yet again for Debs. The socialist press maintained a public facade of unity. "This is our year," Debs predicted in *ISR*, even as his enemies Morris Hillquit and Victor Berger conspired against him. "Let us make the numerals 1912 appear in flaming red in the calendar of this century!"⁴⁵ Debs' optimism was not entirely misplaced, even though his 1908 tally of 420,852 (2.8 percent of the total) had barely surpassed his 1904 count of 402,810 votes. The party had rebounded from the stagnant 1908 election results, boosted by the Milwaukee socialist sweep in 1910. Going into the 1912 election, the party claimed its all-time high of 150,000 members and more than a thousand locally elected officials in thirty-three states and 337 towns and cities.⁴⁶

In 1912 Debs more than doubled his previous tally, winning 901,551 votes, or 6 percent of the total. Nonetheless, those numbers placed him dead last in the four-way contest, behind Woodrow Wilson, elected the first Democratic president in twenty years; Republican incumbent William Howard Taft, and spoiler Theodore Roosevelt, whose renegade Progressive "Bull Moose" Party appropriated many socialist reforms in a robust contest that historian James Chace calls a "defining moment in American history."⁴⁷ H. Gaylord Wilshire was more dismayed by Socialists' failure to win a single congressional seat—compounded by Wisconsin representative Berger's loss of his House seat. *Wilshire's* termed the party's showing a "great disappointment."⁴⁸

Aging *Appeal* publisher Wayland felt even more discouraged. He had been depressed since his second wife died when he crashed their car; Girard gossips cruelly speculated Wayland intended the fatal accident.⁴⁹ He also was seriously ill, and on the Monday after the election, he was to be arraigned in federal court in Fort Scott. He, Warren, and another staffer faced charges of sending obscene material through the mail, stemming from the Leavenworth prison exposé.⁵⁰ On the eve of his scheduled appearance, Wayland retired to his bedroom, stuck a rifle into his mouth, and pulled the trigger.⁵¹ The *Call* said of his death, "He sank under the weight of domestic sorrow, court persecution and physical agony."⁵² The *Appeal* charged its publisher was "hounded to his death by the relentless dogs of capitalism."⁵³ Radical editors eulogized him as a force for socialism.⁵⁴ An antisocialist newspaper in Tishomingo, Oklahoma, however, later charged that Wayland killed himself because he was complicit in the 1899 seduction and murder of a fourteen-year-old girl. The *Appeal* successfully sued the

Remonstrator's publisher, Oklahoma legislator Andrew Allen Veatch, who eventually retracted the story.⁵⁵ *Appeal* historian George Allen England, however, recorded that news Wayland "was to be falsely accused of acts calculated to sully his reputation" did contribute to his suicide.⁵⁶ Although the newspaper published more than 36 million copies in 1912, its publisher's death on the heels of the McNamara debacle accelerated the *Appeal to Reason*'s downhill slide. Reporter Allen Ricker had correctly predicted in 1903 that, "the *Appeal* without Wayland would be like the proverbial play of Hamlet without Hamlet."⁵⁷

Assessment of the *Appeal* as a Social Movement Medium

Personality formed the core of the *Appeal to Reason*'s brand of advocacy journalism, which conspired against its fulfillment of some social movement media functions. Publisher Wayland saw his periodical as key to converting American workers to socialism. Editor Warren used the newspaper like a lance in his journalistic jousting. Reporter Shoaf injected himself into stories. *Appeal* journalists saw themselves as white knights in shining armor slaying the firebreathing dragon of industrial capitalism. When they exposed wrongdoing and supported basic American democratic ideals at great personal risk, the wry publisher, combative editor, and calculating reporter were heroes in the grand American journalistic tradition of comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable. At its best, the *Appeal* provided a much-needed strident voice for workers in the lopsided labor wars. And the newspaper could be generous. When Paterson, New Jersey, authorities set an impossibly high bail of \$5000 for an IWW strike organizer in 1913, for instance, the financially ailing *Appeal* donated the cash to free him.⁵⁸ The extent to which the federal government went to silence the *Appeal* testifies to how threatening it found the weekly's defiance of political and economic hegemony that marginalized workers.

Yet Wayland, Warren, and Shoaf's intense individualism—and perhaps Wayland's unacknowledged capitalistic acumen—conspired against the *Appeal*'s potential to sustain a social movement. The *Appeal* prioritized its interests above those of the socialist social movement despite the vital voice it provided miners, factory workers, and farmers. In other respects, the *Appeal* did not serve workers well. Its fraudulent sleuthing went too far, its self-promotion became too shrill, its reporting too propagandistic. These flaws interfered with its fulfillment of the social movement media function of providing audiences with information. Its

leaders' self-identification as activists first and journalists second detracted from the *Appeal's* credibility. As Shoaf's role in the McNamara case made embarrassingly clear, *Appeal to Reason* readers could not trust their newspaper. Its maverick persona further limited the *Appeal's* ability to nurture socialists' group identity, a function perhaps beyond the power of any periodical, given the multiplicity of the socialist audience.

The *Appeal to Reason's* duplicity undercut its important role as defender of the working class in its roiling economic and political war with industrial capitalism that had culminated at Ludlow. The *Appeal* tried to regain its radical luster by sending John Kenneth Turner on a post-Lud-low cross-country investigation into what the newspaper characterized as "government by Gunmen." In 1914, he traveled more than twelve thousand miles to investigate the role of gunmen that corporations hired with the federal government's blessing to stop strikes and labor unions. Turner interviewed more than one hundred corporate armed guards and worked undercover to obtain more interviews with heads of the nation's largest private security companies. The result was a damning indictment of state-sanctioned violence against American workers. Even amid his copious reportage, however, Turner remained the star of his stories. In Kanawha County, West Virginia: "I myself was hunted; twice my room was entered; once I narrowly missed a shooting affray." In Clinton, Illinois: "I talked with a young workingman who is awaiting trial for murder." In New York: "I saw the professional strike-breaker and labor detective in the making."⁵⁹ Turner's egotism was a microcosm of the *Appeal's*, another impediment to fulfilling social movement media functions such as building community and group identity. Turner's bravado could not mask that the *Appeal's* best days lay behind it; the weekly was in part a victim of its own excess as well as of federal persecution. Turner's "Government by Gunmen" series cost the newspaper several thousand dollars it could ill afford on top of its mounting stack of legal bills. It was the *Appeal to Reason's* last crusade before the creeping world war snuffed out the radicals' call for a cooperative commonwealth.

The Socialist Press as Forum for Debate on Socialist Party Policy

The McNamara case also brought to a boil the long-simmering clash between the Socialists' political and direct-action factions. Much of this battle was waged in the pages of the socialist press, the only forum for a nationwide debate on the

social movement's direction. The leading gradualist papers—Berger's *Milwaukee Leader* and Hillquit's New York mouthpiece, the *Call*—waged war on their more militant competitors, *ISR* publisher Charles Kerr and the *Appeal*. As early as 1904, Berger had used his weekly *Milwaukee Social Democratic Herald* to label the growing *Appeal* a “menace to the movement,” by which he meant it threatened his newspaper's influence.⁶⁰ He also publicly insulted Debs in the *Herald* by implying he was drunk when he penned the 1906 “Arouse Ye Slaves” essay.⁶¹ The *Appeal* slung as much mud back at Berger and his newspapers. Berger and Hillquit favored working with skilled trade unions, specifically Gompers's conservative AFL, which Debs and Kerr considered a sellout. Kerr further lacked faith in political solutions. Since 1908, he had championed the tough-talking IWW's direct-action methods. He called the Wobblies' industrial unionism, which embraced unskilled workers and brooked no compromise, “the best available rallying point for socialists on the economic field.”⁶² Berger dismissed Wobblies as “impossibilists” and condemned IWW sabotage.⁶³ *Solidarity* took no small delight in pointing out that Berger confused the McNamaras' bomb, which it termed a desperate measure of failed trade union policy, with disciplined IWW-style direct action it claimed eschewed violence.⁶⁴

In 1909, the conflicting views informed spirited exchanges among leading socialists in *ISR* when former *ISR* editor Algie Simons proposed creation of a joint Socialist-labor party. Kerr published extensive correspondence between prominent socialists on the topic in its January 1910 issue, even though he opposed the idea, a testament to his commitment to robust debate. Debs protested a labor party compromised revolutionary ideals.⁶⁵ The mild Milwaukee “sewer socialist” victories in 1910 equally disturbed Debs. The two-time presidential candidate incongruously wrote in *ISR*, “Voting for socialism is not socialism any more than a menu is a meal.”⁶⁶ It is telling that all the key socialist players in this fundamental debate controlled or had strong connections to newspapers or magazines. In the final years before broadcast media's ascension, print media access was a requisite of power. Just as the radical press generally charged that the mainstream press was a tool of capitalists, individual radicals used their journals as tools to advance their personal political agendas. Hillquit and Berger, for example, consciously used their newspaper influence in 1912 to elect supporters to the party's national executive committee.⁶⁷ Socialist journals did not merely reflect the movement but shaped it, as demonstrated by the ink spilled that year.

***ISR*'s Fateful Debate on Direct Action**

Kerr again turned *ISR* into a national forum for radical debate in February 1912, this time on the pivotal question of direct action. He demonstrated print media's broad reach when *ISR* published the text of an inflammatory speech Haywood delivered in Harlem, thus disseminating it nationwide. The IWW leader / Socialist Party official in effect advocated violence when he proclaimed that no true socialist was a "law-abiding citizen." Haywood also insulted lawyers and congressmen, jibes that targeted Hillquit and Berger, but it was his justification of sabotage that really rattled other *ISR* commentators in the wake of the McNamara debacle. He concluded brazenly, "It is our purpose to overthrow the capitalist system by forcible means if necessary."⁶⁸ Robert Rives LaMonte's essay in the same issue criticized Haywood's endorsement of unlawfulness.⁶⁹ Kerr's editorial tried to frame the split as a problem of semantics. When *ISR* advocated direct action, Kerr explained, it was referring not to acts of individual violence but only to strikes, a collective expression of the working-class movement.⁷⁰

Debs penned the most momentous reaction to Haywood's speech because it repudiated direct action—a stunning reversal from his fiery rhetoric regarding the McNamaras over the past year as well as his leading role in the 1894 Pullman strike. In a long essay acknowledging his post-McNamara drift from the IWW, Debs declared that direct action, sabotage, and "acts of individual violence" hurt the movement because they gave authorities free license to persecute socialists.⁷¹ His stand perplexed Ben Williams, editor of IWW's official organ, *Solidarity*, because he knew Debs knew the difference between the lethal *Los Angeles Times* bombing and IWW-style direct action.⁷² Or did he? The press, public, and police continued to conflate the vexing phrase with violence despite the IWW's tortured attempts to distinguish direct action from violence.

The philosophical split between the towering labor gods Debs and Haywood, who stood astride both socialism and industrial unionism, threatened the social revolution. The direct-action divide spilled from the pages of the radical press onto the 1912 Socialist Party convention floor. One ramification of the February 1912 *ISR*'s exercise in the democratic ideal of free expression was that Kerr found his business practices investigated by the party's gradualist-dominated national executive committee. After an onsite inspection in May 1912, the committee cleared Kerr, concluding that his company was not a monopoly but a cooperative.⁷³

Ramifications were harsher for Haywood, and they reverberated throughout the radical movement. Hillquit first engineered adoption of a constitutional amendment expelling from the party anyone who “opposes political action or advocates crime, sabotage or other methods of violence as a weapon of the working class.”⁷⁴ The following January, the executive committee expelled Haywood. His ousting cleaved any partnership between the Socialist Party and industrial unionism, in effect halving working-class power in politics and labor to replace industrial capitalism with a cooperative commonwealth.⁷⁵ The radical press reflected the split. “Let Us Recall the Recall,” suggested the *New Review*, an intellectual socialist journal in New York, on the grounds that Haywood’s expulsion “played into the hands of the capitalists.”⁷⁶ Debs biographer Nick Salvatore faults his subject’s failure of leadership for failing to bring the two sides together, especially given Debs’s record near-million votes in the 1912 election.⁷⁷ Salvatore’s analysis is a more measured version of the IWW’s renunciation in *Solidarity* of Debs as “a mere word-juggler, without constancy, devoid of executive ability, and a plaything in the hands of more cunning men.”⁷⁸ In the shadow of the following year’s Ludlow Massacre, Debs would flip-flop again on the use of violence, when he urged miners to buy machine guns.⁷⁹

Debs and Warren Split

Following the Haywood expulsion, Debs urged the *Appeal*’s editor Warren to fight the “machine politicians” he so despised. The latter, however, uncharacteristically turned down the fight. Their correspondence, beginning in summer 1912, reveals the symbiotic relationship between the socialist press and politics as well as insights into Debs’s views on the press’s role in the movement. An exhausted Warren explained to his old friend that the *Appeal* was ailing financially and could ill afford offending subscribers; neither could Socialists risk fragmenting during the presidential election campaign. An unenthusiastic Debs had narrowly defeated Berger and Hillquit’s candidates for his fourth run as the Socialists’ presidential nominee, but the pair conspired to name J. Mahlon Barnes as his campaign manager, which infuriated Debs. Barnes had resigned in disgrace as national party secretary in 1911 when he fathered a child he refused to acknowledge.

Debs implored Warren to expose Barnes in the *Appeal*, in part by painting a party conspiracy against the newspaper. “Officially speaking the Socialist party

is the deadly enemy of the *Appeal* and doing everything in its power to discredit it and those associated with it,” Debs wrote.⁸⁰ A long screed on August 11 contained an undertone of menace:

There are powerful influences at work to undermine and destroy the *Appeal*.... Berger’s Milwaukee papers have made a footmat of the *Appeal* and worse.... If the *Appeal* proposes to remain mute and silent while the boss power develops and practices its abuses upon the party then its day of usefulness will soon be over.... You may think you can exclude party matters from the *Appeal* and keep your hands clean for fear of dirtying them in party fights but it will not be long until you will be forced to change your policy or the star of the *Appeal* will begin to wane.⁸¹

The next week, he inferred that the *Appeal*’s “impotent, inert and cowardly silence” betrayed the party.⁸² An embittered Debs also frequently asserted somewhat dubiously that most of the socialist press “is under the control of the machine.”⁸³ Warren remained resolute: “I shall waste no more of my time fighting Socialists’ questions of tactics and policy. Nor shall I undertake to clean up the party by attacking any individual within our ranks.”⁸⁴

Warren’s refusal to attack Debs’s political foes prompted Debs to leave the *Appeal* after the election, marking another step in its decline. Circulation slipped, and a new newsstand edition never came close to selling a projected one hundred thousand copies.⁸⁵ Nettlesome postal officials demanded the newspaper pay a penny-per-pound postage on tons of returned newspapers that hostile local postmasters refused to deliver.⁸⁶ They backed off after Arizona senator Henry Ashurst demanded an investigation of post office misconduct based on affidavits supplied by Warren. No fan of the socialist press, Ashurst agreed with the editor it “would seem to be pretty well established” that “federal officials have tried to destroy your publications.”⁸⁷ The drained Warren embarked on an extended European vacation in spring 1914. Upon his return, he resigned as *Appeal* managing editor, just days before a blast from a Serbian anarchist’s pistol on June 28, 1914, ignited war in Europe.⁸⁸ An era had ended.

The newspaper skirmishes demonstrate historian David Shannon’s contention that the Socialist Party comprised “a collection of quite diverse and often warring groups, held together only by what proved later to be a poor adhesive, common hostility to industrial capitalism.”⁸⁹ Although Simons asserted that newspaper debates formed an “essential part of democracy,” as

early as 1905 the then-*ISR* editor editorialized that the squabbling had gone too far. “Many a time a disagreement which was only of local interest and could be settled only by local action has been magnified by socialist yellow journalism into a question of national importance,” he wrote.⁹⁰ Hillquit, who figured prominently in these rows, recalled decades later: “I shudder to think of the reams of paper and quantities of printer’s ink consumed in the pamphlets, newspaper articles, manifestos, appeals, charges, and counter charges which came in incessant torrents from all parties against all other parties and of the picturesque epithets in which they abounded.”⁹¹

Socialists’ Resistance to a Party Press

Yet Hillquit’s vociferous opposition to a party newspaper at the party’s founding convention in 1901 had created the cacophonous pack of independent periodicals he came to regret. Berger also supported the constitutional amendment that forbade a party organ, a consequence of doctrinaire Daniel De Leon’s dictatorial hold on the *Daily People* in the 1890s. A basic tenet of the top-down De Leon’s philosophy had been that the party must control its press as did European Socialists. Their organizations published their own organs and banned private socialist periodicals. Wayland opposed a party press in favor of autonomy for state branches to choose their propaganda, displaying his entrepreneurial flair by offering up the *Appeal* to help establish “thousands of branches in the next few months.”⁹² Even Berger, a likely candidate to edit a party organ, supported the ban and made no bid to position the *Social Democratic Herald* as the new party’s journal. He undoubtedly had De Leon in mind when he stated that a single official journal put too much power in the hands of one man. De Leonism so offended Socialists that the 1901 unity convention entertained a resolution that “every expression of opinion on the part of a member of the party should find a place in the local organs of the party.”⁹³ It was tabled after Hillquit deemed it impossible to effect.

The ban on a party organ was radical not just because it countered the mainstream media trend toward conglomeration and corporate hierarchy but also because a decentralized press offered individuals and factions a powerful forum for challenging the party line. The decision revealed idealistic faith in classical liberalism’s tenet that truth inevitably triumphed in the marketplace of ideas. The vote for a competitive free press symbolized the party’s American political sensibilities. The policy also conspired against the social movement’s need to

forge a strong group identity and sense of community, as the diversity of independent periodicals and their publishers' varied takes on socialism diluted and occasionally contradicted the Socialist Party message.

Several locals revived the call for an official national party newspaper at the 1904 national convention in Chicago. The press committee, headed by Simons, rejected their suggestion. The committee offered a hazy alternative to "recommend that any paper that assumes to speak for the Socialist party should be under the control of party members or the party organization." Delegates rejected the proposal as unworkable. "If a paper like the *American Labor Union Journal* comes out and says 'Socialism is so and so, we believe in this and that,' what are you going to do to them?" asked an Illinois delegate. "Throw them into jail if they assume to speak for the Socialist Party?"⁹⁴

Despite the committee's dismissal, supporters moved to publish a national party newspaper. The *Appeal to Reason's* long reach loomed over the 1904 debate. Subscribers "believe in it almost as Christian people believe in their Bible," worried delegate Charles Toole of Maryland. Why, he asked, should national committee members trust Wayland more than an editor they would elect? Wayland has "built up a mighty party machine," he added. "He controls the Socialist movement of this country and in this convention." Supporters advanced other reasons for getting into the newspaper business: Warren Webster of Ohio opined that socialists should practice the public ownership they preached. Others argued competition forced hundreds of struggling private socialist organs to fight each other for survival. Some of them, claimed California delegate Charles Deutzman, spouted nonsense that made them "the laughing stock of real Socialists." Irene Smith of Oregon suggested converting an existing journal into a national party organ—perhaps Kerr's *ISR*. That was too much for delegate and rival editor Berger, who cracked, "Would you call the editor of that paper the party pope or party oracle?"⁹⁵

In the end, lingering bad memories of De Leon—Minnesotan Thomas Lucas claimed his *People* "wrecked the Socialist movement"—defeated the motion. Most delegates agreed with journalist John Spargo that a surplus of uncontrollable socialist editors posed a lesser evil than a single, official "infallible literary pope" upon whose editorial judgment rested the entire socialist movement. They retained the 1901 constitutional provision that forbade a party paper when foes challenged it at a later session.⁹⁶ But the notion lingered. Headquarters launched a monthly bulletin in September 1904. In 1909, party leftists who were losing influence to the moderates rejected a renewed call for a party press, on the grounds its editors would wield too much power. By

1912, the ban against an official national newspaper had helped spawn at least 323 socialist newspapers and magazines, including 5 English and 8 foreign-language dailies, 262 English and 36 foreign-language weeklies, 10 English and 2 foreign-language monthlies.⁹⁷ While much of their contents was redundant, their number was a testament to the American desire to express their particular voice through print culture. They also exhibited enough diversity in political outlook to hint at the radical social movement's eventual failure to mobilize the social revolution. Even opponents of a party newspaper began to reconsider whether Socialists needed a single, official organ.

Birth and Short Life of a Socialist Party Newspaper

By the 1910s, Hillquit had reversed his antiparty press stance, charging that private publishers had commercialized socialism. He urged the party to publish its own official newspaper. The Socialist Party was not exactly voiceless. In 1911, the national office sent from Chicago thirty-seven leaflets and pamphlets, totaling almost 5 million pieces of literature that earned nearly \$8000. "The spread of the printed word has come to be recognized as the most important means of propaganda," remarked then-national secretary Barnes. The national office sent "propaganda articles" to four hundred union, socialist, or other periodicals that agreed to print at least one article a week. It also sent a reporter to Washington for the 1911 congressional session, in which Berger was serving as the first Socialist representative.⁹⁸ The *New Review*, however, panned the correspondent as a party hack, observing, "This correspondent's conception of his functions and duties appear to be that of official panegyrist of the party's high officials."⁹⁹

The party churned out so much literature that Simons blamed the mimeograph machine for fueling information overload. "The fatal facility with which a number of copies can be run off on this new invention practically makes every man his own newspaper and has led to a tremendous multiplication of "'protests,' 'statements,' 'explanations,' 'suggestions,' etc.," he wrote.¹⁰⁰ He charged that the national office spent nearly a third of its budget—more than any socialist newspaper, save one—to mail voluminous publications to a few party officials. Headquarters expected Socialist locals to distribute its literature. The party also created a four-person Information Department and Research Bureau in 1913, although it closed in November 1915.¹⁰¹ The Socialist Party also inched closer to publishing its own journal, introducing the *Party Builder* newsletter at

the end of contentious 1912. The four-page weekly failed to satisfy critics who advocated an actual official party newspaper. As calls for a party press escalated *Party Builder* the next month doubled to eight pages and reported on national office activities.

The party commissioned a report that called for converting *Party Builder* into its official newspaper. “The press of the Party is the most influential element in shaping the destiny and tactics of the organization, yet with a privately owned press the dues paying membership is utterly powerless to control either the tactics or the propaganda of its press,” stated its author, Francis Marshall Elliott. “The organization is thus at the absolute mercy of the vagaries and opinions of an irresponsible group of editors who can say or do exactly as they please in matters of both tactics and propaganda.” Elliot’s report called for a party-owned journal whose managing editors would be elected by dues-paying members who also could recall them, thus preventing editorial autocracy.¹⁰²

Kerr opposed the move; he argued both the right and left factions got hearings in the independent journals. “We have free speech and a free press,” he editorialized. If he failed to voice his socialist readers’ majority view, Kerr explained, they would not buy his magazine.¹⁰³ Revolutionist Kerr found himself in rare agreement with *Leader* publisher Berger, the most gradual of gradualists. As journalists, both men appreciated the role of a competitive press. Berger also feared that an opposing faction could gain control of a party paper. And, of course, the *Leader*, like the *ISR*, stood to lose subscribers if a party periodical appeared. Both publishers received subsidies from the party, which they’d likely lose if it financed an official organ of its own. Kerr argued fruitlessly for creating a socialist press service instead, to provide some consistent content for the independent newspapers.¹⁰⁴ Elliot responded that the publishers “cunningly seized upon” the fear of autocracy to protect their own financial interests: “A privately owned socialist press is an anomaly and can only be defended upon the pure Capitalistic grounds of private initiative and private interest.”¹⁰⁵

Editors of privately published socialist newspapers could inflict “any hair brained opinion upon any possible question” in the party’s name, his report stated. It cited as an example an unnamed newspaper that advocated public confiscation of industry although the party never officially sanctioned that tactic. The report pointed out that the German socialist party annually netted a half million dollars from more than sixty party-owned dailies and other party books and literature. Elliott computed at \$4,385,000 the amount the Socialist Party of America had spent since its founding to sustain innumerable private socialist

print enterprises. The sum included *Milwaukee Democratic Herald* and *Milwaukee Daily Leader*, \$500,000; *Wilshire's*, \$750,000; *Chicago Daily Socialist* and other publications, \$500,000; *Coming Nation*, \$135,000; Kerr publications, \$400,000; the New York dailies, *Call* and *Forward*; \$350,000; and five hundred local publications at \$1000 each, for another \$500,000. The figure also included another \$1.25 million in estimated income lost to the *Appeal to Reason* since its inception. "The energy and vitality expended cannot be computed," Elliott added. "Into this vortex of waste and failure has been poured without stint the lives of countless thousands of the noblest Comrades this age has produced." He cast a covetous eye on the *Appeal*, which had debuted six years before the party:

Had the National Organization at its command to-day the *Appeal* Army of Fifty Thousand voluntary fighters what might it not accomplish? This great army of loyal, self sacrificing Comrades has been marshaled in the service of a private enterprise the benefits of which are merely incidental to the organized Socialist movement.... The prestige, the glory and the power of the *Appeal* had just as well have belonged to the organized movement in America as to private enterprise had the policy of a Party Owned Press prevailed instead of the archaic irresponsible policy of delegating this vital function to private capitalistic interests.¹⁰⁶

In April 1914, *Party Builder* reported on a resolution by the Pennsylvania branch that proclaimed the Socialist Party had outgrown the "somewhat anarchistic" condition of its polyglot press. In addition to previous arguments about wasted money and energy, the piece charged malfeasance on the part of some anonymous publishers: "There have been instances when unscrupulous and self-seeking individuals used the money and talents of loyal party members for purposes having nothing in common with the interests of the party members or even openly antagonistic to the best interests of the party."¹⁰⁷ Renewed appeals urged members to build *Party Builder* circulation so it could counter the corporate dailies' "powerful influence" in goading the nation into war in Mexico and Europe.¹⁰⁸

Hillquit moved at that month's national executive committee meeting to convert *Party Builder* into an official party newspaper. "The party's intellectual growth has been stunted," he argued. The motion passed 45–10, with Berger among opponents. Circulation manager Ricker optimistically projected *Party Builder* would pay for itself by expanding its circulation to fifty thousand. J. Louis Engdahl, editor of the defunct *Chicago Daily Socialist*, outlined a plan in

the next *Party Bulletin*: The official weekly would feature an open forum, respect the party platform, and allow readers to submit grievances to the national committee.¹⁰⁹

In July 1914, the weekly *American Socialist* replaced *Party Builder* and became the party's first official newspaper. Berger sat on a board of five that directed editorial policy. Engdahl edited *American Socialist*, and a number of *Appeal* journalists, including cartoonist Ryan Walker, migrated to it.¹¹⁰ The newspaper even mimicked Wayland-style paragraphing with aphorisms such as "Preparedness is not for peace, but for pieces."¹¹¹ *American Socialist* expended most of its energies, however, protesting the war that broke out within weeks of its launch. The weekly did not become a force in the movement before the party shuttered it in 1916. Historian Jeffrey Heynen believes the organ failed because the Socialists failed to create a labor party. Nonetheless, he concludes, "This lively paper held to its principles to the end and deserves to be remembered for the bravery with which it stuck to an increasingly unpopular cause."¹¹²

Conclusion

The party's inability to foster a party press highlights a fundamental difference between European and American socialists. Scholar Jason Martinek argues creation of *American Socialist* marked an acknowledgment of the socialists' failed experiment in the democratic ideal of a free press. "The press failed to become the unifier that party leaders hoped it would be," he writes. "Instead, it was an instrument of divisiveness, undermining the very movement that gave it life."¹¹³ Another interpretation is that the ingrained American individualism noted in Elliott's 1913 report prized freedom of expression above cooperation or consensus. American socialists were leery of an institutionalized, controlled, official press because the concept was antithetical to the republican values so entwined with their broadly conceived social revolution. An "official" press denoted tyranny in the American subconscious, and the free-press guarantee was one of the first products of the American Revolution that so many socialists believed paralleled their social revolution. Beyond their call for abolishing capitalism, a free press and free speech were probably the most consistently shared goals of the obstreperous socialist press. The competing, privately owned socialist journals unfailingly supported rival radical editors in the face of governmental oppression. The sole exception, tellingly, was when De Leon unsuccessfully connived to strip the IWW's *Industrial Union Bulletin* of its

precious second-class mail status. American individualism, especially pronounced among journalists, held broader ramifications for the overall socialist movement: the rich socialist print culture spawned by the party press ban may have conspired against sustaining a cohesive social movement.

It is difficult to imagine that a single publication ever could have satisfied the demands of the diverse socialist movement. That socialism spawned so many periodicals reflected rather than caused the movement's inability to solidify into a single force that could overpower capitalist hegemony. Multitudinous accounts of state-sanctioned violence against workers chronicled in the pages of the *Appeal*, *Call*, *ISR*, and myriad other socialist periodicals attest to massive corporate power. If nothing else, the socialist newspapers served as witness to the brutal way the rising corporate state treated its workers. Just one example, Turner's Government by Gunmen series, abundantly documents Salvatore's observation that throughout the labor wars, "it was working people who gathered at the grave, buried their dead, and sifted the ashes of their torched union hall and offices."¹¹⁴

The multifaceted socialist press spoke in a single voice on the value of a free press. Every socialist publisher supported the envied *Appeal to Reason* in its battles with the federal government. That the government could bring the powerful *Appeal* to its knees through constant harassment indicates the formidable odds against radical press success. The financial demands of the capitalist system compounded the odds against the cashstrapped dissident periodicals' chances of survival.

In addition to those external pressures, the *Appeal* did itself and socialism no favors when it squandered its opportunity to lead the gathering movement by grandstanding in the prolonged Warren case, which was at least in part a publicity gimmick, and by sensationalizing the McNamara case to the point of deceiving readers. By the time the party rolled out its official *American Socialist*, it was too late for a single periodical to salvage the socialist movement. To expect it ever could was fantastical thinking. One delegate's comment during the 1904 convention debate on the party press illustrates socialists' naïveté about human nature. "When Socialism comes," predicted Thomas Lucas, "no press can hurt us, because we will have only one press representing a united mankind."¹¹⁵

One radical organization that did not share the Socialists' aversion to a party press was the IWW. No organization depended more on newspapers, which the Wobblies owned and operated as a form of the direct action they espoused.

CHAPTER FIVE

WOBBLIES

JOURNALISM AS DIRECT ACTION BY THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

The fanatical Religion of Rebellion at whose shrine we chanted
hymns of hope and hatred.

RALPH CHAPLIN, *Wobbly: The Rough-and-Tumble Story of an American
Radical*

We hate their rotten system more than any mortals do,
Our aim is not to patch it up, but build it all anew
And what we'll have for government, when finally we're through,
IS ONE BIG INDUSTRIAL UNION!

RALPH CHAPLIN, "Paint 'Er Red"

■ Ralph Chaplin grinned as he and the other men folding copies of *Solidarity* belted out the lyrics to "Paint 'Er Red." The volunteers showed up at the Industrial Workers of the World's hall in Cleveland after their regular jobs every week on press day to help mail its scrappy four-page newspaper. The versatile Chaplin helped edit *Solidarity*, which occasionally featured one of his poems or occasional cartoons. He reveled in the volunteers' rough-and-ready camaraderie as they stuffed newspapers into mailbags. "Young, lively, witty, and pugnacious," the men carted the mailbags on their backs to the Cleveland post office around midnight. After shedding their bundles, they stopped at the corner saloon for a beer and a sandwich. "Fellow workers," Chaplin called them, in IWW parlance, as opposed to the more generic socialist "comrade." The IWW greeting captured members' sense of themselves as the authentic proletariat.¹ Another of Chaplin's rousing revolutionary songs, "Solidarity Forever," served as the IWW anthem because it conveyed its faith in a global union of all workers—no matter their race, sex, or nationality—who someday would own and

manage world industry. He set it to the tune of the popular old slave song “John Brown’s Body,” which abolitionist Julia Ward Howe rewrote as “Battle Hymn of the Republic.” Chaplin had no use for her lyrics—his refrain: “The Union makes us strong.”²

■ ■ ■

Wobblies sang at work; on the picket line; as they rode the rails; and in prison, where many languished during World War I. Songs were a key part of Wobbly culture that helped these often homeless men, usually working in the worst jobs for the lowest wages, feel a part of something bigger than themselves. Their many newspapers similarly forged group identity. The organization originated in Chicago in 1905, cosponsored by the granite-tough Western Federation of Miners. Its manifesto called for industrial unionism, an Americanized amalgam of anarchy and syndicalism, in which democratic groups of collectivized unions would run the economy. The Wobbly anarcho-syndicalists were staunch economic determinists who eschewed politics in the belief that government was merely a sop for capitalists.³ IWW historian Melvyn Dubofsky put it another way: “The history of the Wobblies is also part of the never-ending struggle to humanize conditions in the workplace by creating a social system in which workers, through their own democratic institutions, determine the nature and goals of work.”⁴ In marked contrast to the AFL’s stratified trade unions, the IWW’s One Big Union welcomed all workers, no matter how unskilled. Mother Jones attended the June 27 convention called to order by Big Bill Haywood, as did Haymarket widow Lucy Parsons, socialist editor Algie Simons, and some two hundred workers.⁵ The IWW was very much an organization of the Mountain West that coursed from the Cascades and Rocky mountains through Arizona, embracing the transient miners and farm workers whom the AFL ignored. Historian Robert Salter Jr. claims the IWW launched “the first really American revolutionary movement since the 1770s,” although other scholars argue this view slights the significant influence of immigrants such as Italian anarchists who shaped IWW ideology and techniques.⁶

Wielding Journalism as a Form of Direct Action

Wobblies believed in the power of the press. The IWW plied journalism as direct action, its much-debated and misunderstood doctrine of mustering labor power to combat capitalism. “Wobblies had a compulsion to publish newspapers, and a

positive knack for the craft,” asserts Joseph Conlin.⁷ Paul Frederick Brissenden counted twenty-eight English-language IWW periodicals and thirty-three in some twenty foreign languages between 1905 and 1919, although many lasted only one issue.⁸ At its peak, according to historian Jon Bekken, the IWW simultaneously published two English-language weekly newspapers, a monthly magazine, several local and industrial bulletins, and more than a dozen foreign-language periodicals.⁹ This chapter will explore the central role of its press as a social movement medium in IWW strategy and culture, which prized both independence and community as expressed in a distinctive Wobbly verbal and visual rhetoric that ranged from romantic to ferocious.

Chaplin, who became *Solidarity* editor in 1917, was one of several rebel poets who edited IWW journals. He began donating articles to *Solidarity* when he moved to Cleveland from the troubled West Virginia coalfields in 1913. Born in rural Kansas in 1887 to pioneers who six years later moved to Chicago, a seven-year-old Chaplin witnessed a worker being shot dead in the 1894 Pullman car strike. As a teen, he read Karl Marx, heard Eugene Debs and Haywood, and became radicalized while riding the rails seeking work. Back in Chicago, he illustrated literature for the Charles Kerr Publishing Company, which hired him part-time to design covers for *International Socialist Review*. He juggled the job with illustrating Jack London’s *Dream of Debs*. “He had an extremely complex mind, was a very complicated person,” recalled Fred Thompson, the jailed Charleston, West Virginia, socialist editor for whom Chaplin had filled in during the violent coal country strikes. “He seemed to be always searching.”¹⁰ Chaplin described his IWW work as if it were a religious conversion: “We few against the world, united under the crimson ‘One Big Union’ banner to end war, injustice, and exploitation—to bring peace, happiness, and security to the disinherited of the earth! This, and the prospect of battling against great odds, was all that it took to send us out into the world as uncompromising champions of human rights and freedom. It was the fanatical Religion of Rebellion at whose shrine, for lack of any other perhaps, we chanted hymns of hope and hatred in honor of the doctrine that might makes right.”¹¹

That doctrine was better known as direct action. To the IWW, “direct action” broadly meant labor’s power to paralyze industry, the “essential means” to a nonviolent transition to industrial unionism. The IWW ideal was that with the start of any strike, no matter how small, in support, all members of that industry—or all industry—cease work. The culmination of this strategy was the elusive global general strike, which hopeful IWW newspapers frequently saw taking shape whenever a group of beleaguered workers walked off the job.¹²

The public, primed by the mainstream press, associated the pugnacious IWW with real dynamite.¹³ Hegemonic media frames stirred an anti-Wobbly furor that incited public fear of challenges to the status quo. Mainstream media induced a moral panic about the IWW over violence it rarely, if ever, committed.¹⁴ Brissenden wrote in his 1919 study of the IWW: “The papers have printed so much about this organization and maintained such a nationwide conspiracy of silence as to its real philosophy—especially to the constructive items of its philosophy—that the popular conception of this labor group is a weird unreality.”¹⁵ Wobbly journals reciprocated mainstream press enmity in polemics splashed across their pages. One 1910 *Industrial Worker* cartoon contrasted headlines of the “*Morning Liar*” with those in the *IW*.¹⁶



Wobbly periodicals preached the virtues of direct action over the vote. *Organize on the Job Where You Are Robbed*, *Industrial Worker*, March 23, 1911.

Wobbly editors' fondness for incendiary verbal and visual rhetoric coupled with intimations of violence only conflated public fear. An editorial in the inaugural *Solidarity*, for example, stated of its class-war strategy: “Whatever means are necessary will be employed.”¹⁷ In its first few months, *Solidarity* ran an innocuous briefs column provocatively titled, “Stray Bullets,” succeeded by a “paragraphing” roundup bylined “A Western Rifleman.” In the mid-teens, the newspaper tried to counter its violent image with an occasional column titled “The Constructive Program of the IWW,” but the damage was done. Mainstream news media cherry-picked macho Wobbly rhetoric to demonize the IWW as a

lethal mob. In reality, Wobblies inevitably found themselves on the receiving end of guns and clubs or tar and feathers.

Its journalists' faith in newspapers sounds achingly idealistic in the era of diminishing print media. The press, according to IWW editor Justus Ebert, was "more than a mere combination of capital, machines and men, for the conveying of information—it is a moulder of thought, an inciter to action, an engine of oppression or progress, according to the interests it seeks to destroy or promote."¹⁸ Headquarters instructed members to distribute IWW literature and recommended every local stock a reading room with radical books and newspapers.¹⁹ That physical space nurtured Wobbly community and educated unschooled workers in the class struggle. Besides providing far-flung membership with information on its activities and educating readers on industrial unionism, IWW newspapers employed crude but powerful satire, cartoons, poetry, and a rhetoric of outrage to mobilize and sustain workers in their challenge to industrial capitalism. A headline in the IWW's Louisiana branch newspaper, the *Lumberjack*, practically parodied Wobbly journalistic hubris above a story about a flooded town that had been the site of a brutal labor battle: "God Joins I.W.W."²⁰

Sabotage and Rhetorical Warfare in the IWW Press

IWW journals performed another civic exercise by engaging the capitalist press in the twentieth century's first rhetorical war over the legitimate use of power, according to radical historian Michael Cohen.²¹ As a corollary to their challenge to the use of state and corporate power against workers, IWW newspapers advocated workers' use of sabotage, a particularly inflammatory aspect of direct action adopted from European syndicalism. The term, which originated in the late 1800s among French syndicalists, described working slowly or clumsily to avenge ill treatment or pay cuts. In the 1910s, Wobblies listed disabling machines, performing shoddy work, or wasting time as forms of sabotage. "Everybody's doing it," a 1913 *Solidarity* column advised. "Let's do it together. The ethical side of it need not concern us."²² IWW journals took pains to define sabotage as an attack on corporate property that intended human beings no harm. "Sabotage is an awakening of labor," stated a 1909 editorial in its *Industrial Worker*. "It is the spirit of revolt."²³ A less lofty 1910 item coyly suggested, "Accidents will happen you know, and they do—lots of them."²⁴

The newspaper only published two anonymous accounts of actual sabotage,

however, according to scholar Thomas McEnroe.²⁵ The sabotage debate isolated the IWW from most of its potential radical allies. “I for one do not believe in murder as a means of propaganda,” declared Wobbly nemesis Victor Berger in his 1912 Socialist convention speech against IWW sabotage. His extremist interpretation of direct action indicated the divisive passions the topic aroused among socialists, anarchists, and industrial unionists.²⁶ IW editor Walker Smith retaliated with a caustic editorial that dripped sarcasm. “Don’t Do It, Boys” advised: “Don’t use sabotage and for your kind forbearance we feel sure that you will receive enough to cut your wages so as to save you the trouble of spending so much, and lengthen your hours so that the devil may find no mischief for idle hands to do.”²⁷ Just months after the Socialist Party kicked out Haywood as fallout from the McNamara debacle, a defiant Smith published a twelve-part series justifying sabotage.²⁸ Smith went too far even for the IWW when he placed on the front page of *Solidarity*’s May Day number a cartoon of bombs bursting above a line of people dancing around the globe. He penned an explanatory note the following week, headlined “Mental Bombs Only,” but the general executive board fired him two months later.²⁹

Fluctuating interpretations of direct action colored the IWW’s relationship with other streams of radicalism. Anarchist *Mother Earth* waxed romantic about the IWW’s “brave sturdy boys, full of the spirit of revolt.”³⁰ Italian immigrant anarcho-syndicalists affiliated with the IWW almost immediately; their New Jersey-based *La Questione Sociale* was among the first radical newspapers to carry the IWW logo.³¹ Despite their shared aversion to politics, the IWW distinguished itself from anarchists by renouncing the bomb-throwing “propaganda of the deed” advocated by anarchists’ most militant factions. “The gun as a substitute for industrial organization is a fatal illusion,” editorialized *Solidarity*.³² IWW journals alleged anarchists lacked a strategy to win the class war and critiqued what it termed the anarchist emphasis on individualism over collectivism. Footloose Wobblies, however, were notoriously individualistic—a trait that sometimes undermined their hallowed ideal of solidarity. As contemporary critic John Graham Brooks observed of the IWW, “No one uses the word ‘organization’ oftener and practices it less.”³³

Wobblies also were distinct from socialists, largely because of their differences on the use of direct action and sabotage, as well as their contrasting views on engaging in politics. Radicalism was fluid, however, and some militant socialists moved in both circles. The IWW saw itself as part of a spiritual movement with a broader vision than the gradualist socialists. As Covington

Hall, another Wobbly rebel-poet-editor (to be discussed in [chapter 8](#)), once scoffed, “The American working class will not accomplish anything so long as it cannot dream higher than the Socialist party’s ideal of ‘ten dollars a day for four hours a day.’”³⁴ It was inevitable the IWW, a distinct social movement in its own right, would launch its own newspaper to express its particular brand of radicalism within months of its founding convention.

Industrial Worker and the FreeSpeech Fights

The *Industrial Worker*, which debuted in January 1906 in Joliet, Illinois, became the union’s “main organ for shaping and disseminating its views,” according to scholar Bekken, also a former editor of the four-page weekly.³⁵ But initially *IW* almost fell victim to the nightmare scenario that had spooked socialists into banning a party organ: The IWW’s deposed president refused to relinquish control of *IW* after the 1906 convention, forcing the organization to respond with the *Industrial Union Bulletin*. Appearing weekly between March 2, 1907, and November 12, 1908, the bulletin served as a forum for the warring IWW factions: industrial unionists against Daniel De Leon, who inserted himself into the scuffle by affiliating his minuscule Socialist Labor Party with the Wobblies in a fruitless effort to convert the apolitical IWW into an adjunct of the political party. De Leon even campaigned for the Post Office to deny the *Bulletin* second-class mailing privileges, because he alleged it espoused anarchist principles. The IWW executive board suspended the financially troubled *Bulletin*, whose last issue appeared on March 6, 1909.³⁶ An even greater loss occurred when the Western Federation of Miners severed its connection to the IWW because the infighting resulted in the IWW’s official rejection of political action.³⁷

Industrial Worker lay dormant until the IWW’s 1909 freespeech fights. This early exercise in civil disobedience pioneered a new form of direct action and earned the publicity-conscious IWW its first national attention. Spokane, Washington, found itself in the limelight when IWW soapboxers took on crooked employment agents known as “sharks,” who pocketed fees upfront from migrant workers for nonexistent jobs.³⁸ The city banned street meetings to silence the soapboxers, but they kept talking. On March 5, the first IWW speakers were each fined \$100 and jailed thirty days.³⁹ Eight more were arrested March 6, and twenty on March 8. *Industrial Worker* resurfaced in Spokane ten days later to provide a voice for the silenced IWW.

The newspaper proved a font of information. One story explained the

evolution of laws against assemblies and free speech. An insider's account claimed the jailed Wobblies received only bread and water twice a day, cells never were cleaned, and men in overcrowded cells could not lie down. "The misery in these cells was something never to be forgotten—sore, sleepy and stomach sick and the air foul," it reported. It painted a positive portrait of well-disciplined Wobbly prisoners who sang revolutionary songs, conducted business meetings, and refused work on the rock pile. Authorities released them early due to the cost and uproar over the law.⁴⁰

When the freespeech campaign resumed November 2, police charged hundreds of IWW soapboxers with disorderly conduct because a judge had ruled the street-speaking ban unconstitutional. More than four hundred convicted Wobblies were sentenced to thirty days in jail. They included *Worker* associate editor Agnes Thecia Fir, whom police interrogators allegedly threatened with rape.⁴¹ An alleged attack on a one-armed worker selling the *IW* in front of his shop offered more evidence of risks facing Wobblies.⁴² *IW* editors counseled nonviolence and limited retaliation to name-calling in headlines, as in "Spokane Police are Inhuman Monsters."⁴³ Three men died from prison, cold, or beatings. Vivid accounts of battles waging just down the street from the *Worker* office often were in the first person. "Just at this moment the present writer has paused to see six I.W.W. boys arrested after being pushed and cuffed all around the streets," stated one.⁴⁴ James Stark's prison diary appeared on the front page:

Nov. 28—Guards want us to carry wood again. We refuse. They keep us without wood all night. The weather is bitter cold. No covering for any.
Nov. 30—Fifteen more of the men very sick, and ask to go to hospital.
They are all refused, yet are very sick.⁴⁵

The arrival of nineteen-year-old IWW organizer Elizabeth Gurley Flynn signaled the campaign's significance. Silver-tongued Flynn had been a "class-conscious, feminist child prodigy" whose first of ten arrests occurred when she was sixteen as she and her father stopped traffic to soapbox in the Bronx.⁴⁶ The beautiful "Rebel Girl" was an anomaly in the male-dominated IWW. Her call to action on the *Worker*'s November 10 front page played to the Wobblies' sense of masculinity. "Can you afford to be a coward? Don't be a quitter. Don't 'sympathize' with free speech. Go to jail for it!" she declared. "Are you going to let women go to jail while you stay out?"⁴⁷ The teen had been jailed a month earlier during a successful freespeech fight in Missoula, Montana.⁴⁸ Flynn's call to action highlighted the prestige Wobblies conferred on jail time. The *Worker*

claimed that jail lost its power to oppress when workers viewed it as empowering.⁴⁹ The article also exhibits how the newspaper instilled an unparalleled sense of group identity intense enough to mobilize hundreds to risk jail to join the IWW freespeech fight.

Worker editors got a chance to experience how empowering jail could be when police raided IWW headquarters and confiscated all seven thousand copies of the *IW* as it came off the press. They arrested editor James Wilson, associate editor A. E. Cousins, and two other editors on conspiracy charges. Acting editor E. J. Foote was arrested the next day, but the next issue appeared on schedule, “much to the chagrin and amazement of the authorities,” Flynn reported in *ISR*. “Perhaps they now understand that every member in turn will take their place in the editorial chair before our paper will be suppressed.”⁵⁰ Flynn also was jailed, although she had delayed arrest by chaining herself to a lamppost. A December 25 cartoon showed a Spokane cop clubbing the *Worker* press, its tiny editor squashed beneath his feet.⁵¹ Police also briefly jailed eight *IW* newsboys, ages eight to sixteen; confiscated eight consecutive editions; and arrested each of the eight Wobblies who stepped forward to edit the next issue.⁵²

Flynn, who doubled as the pro-IWW *ISR*’s Spokane correspondent, traced the fight’s larger significance in its pages. She was such a celebrity that *ISR* included her portrait with each of her dispatches.⁵³ “It is to prevent the free press and labor’s right to organize from being throttled,” she wrote. She attacked media hegemony when she charged that the capitalist press had “lied about us systematically and unscrupulously.” She added, “It is only through the medium of the Socialist and labor press that we can hope to reach the ear of the public.”⁵⁴ *IW* used several rhetorical strategies to reach those ears. It likened the freespeech fight to the lonely battles waged by abolitionists Elijah Lovejoy, William Lloyd Garrison, and John Brown.⁵⁵ It quoted Patrick Henry, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, John Greenleaf Whittier, and Macbeth—“Be bloody bold and resolute.”⁵⁶ It used hyperbole, as in a comparison of treatment in Spokane’s jails to Belgian atrocities against natives in the Congo.⁵⁷ When people threw food to the prisoners in a wagon, Flynn described a police officer kicking it away from them: “With face and form like an African gorilla, showing no sign of either human compassion or intelligence, he held back the weakened men that they might not catch the fruit thrown.”⁵⁸ Supportive letters and resolutions from across the country published in the *Worker* reflected the imagined community nurtured by the newspaper, which claimed circulation ranged between three thousand and five thousand copies in 1911.⁵⁹

IWW headquarters moved to Coeur d'Alene to avoid trumped-up conspiracy charges, but *Worker* editors dared police to figure out who were its leaders and editors.⁶⁰ A week later, police raided the print shop again and confiscated the newspaper. Wilson and three assistant editors were rearrested and convicted of conspiracy; the former served nearly six months at hard labor.⁶¹ *IW* moved to Seattle at the end of the year. Spokane officials surrendered on the eve of a planned new campaign in March, however, and agreed to allow Wobblies to soapbox and move their newspaper back.

Philip Foner, William Preston, and Robert Tyler are among historians who claim the Spokane freespeech fights as a big success for the Wobblies.⁶² From New Hampshire to San Francisco, some twenty more IWW campaigns had surfaced by 1913, even though violence against IWW soapboxers intensified.⁶³ News coverage in San Francisco was so biased—one article called the Italians a “hooting, howling mob”—that the entire Italian-language press united in support of the speakers.⁶⁴ In San Diego in spring 1912, 210 people were jailed and many beaten by vigilantes, a harbinger of intensifying violence against IWW soapboxers that would culminate four years later in Everett, Washington.⁶⁵

Functions of the *Industrial Worker*

Throughout the freespeech campaigns, the nationally circulated *IW* served as the IWW's main mouthpiece in the West. Hubris, defiance, polemics, propaganda, vitriol, sardonic humor, and ridicule flowed from its pages. It also gave workers information on the national organization as well as providing tramp workers with practical information. A rare eight-page number printed the seventh annual convention's entire “Report of the General Executive Board.”⁶⁶ *IW* kept men informed of union business and published various locals' meeting times and locations. It also exuded a global flair; as the IWW rejected the concept of nation-states, *IW* also kept tabs on radical labor in other countries.⁶⁷ Editors educated readers about French anarcho-syndicalism and reported frequently on inklings of general strikes in Europe they hoped to replicate. The IWW preamble appeared prominently in each number. It began, “The working class and the employing class have nothing in common.” *IW* rhetoric likewise employed the “we” and “they” dichotomy that social movement media use to build group identity and mobilize members against a common enemy. Slaves and masters were overworked synonyms for workers and capitalists.⁶⁸ Militant headlines

often claimed the master class was running scared or invoked battle.⁶⁹ Editors were fond of boldfacing key phrases in stories. Copy generally was well edited, if predictable: *IW* deemed capitalism responsible for every social ill. The newspaper's appeal for worker solidarity was unending.⁷⁰

Wobblies' distinctive sense of humor gave the newspaper much of its flavor. One contributor characterized IWW humor as a diamond in the rough: "It comes a-crashing down like the discharge of a glacier and either provokes a roaring ha-ha-ha—or is passed over with the simulated stolidity of an Indian."⁷¹ McEnroe characterizes IWW humor as satirizing the contrast between "pious promise" and "bitter reality."⁷² An *IW* editorial comment on epidemic unemployment epitomized the technique: "Oh, say, can you see how this land of the free, means freedom from eating for you and for me."⁷³ Crude but powerful cartoons were an important part of *IW*'s editorial mix.⁷⁴ A typical example in 1910 depicted a cop standing on a trampled U.S. Constitution as he beats a Wobbly, symbolizing the travesty of American values.⁷⁵ Ernest Riebe's popular strip, which debuted on November 7, 1912, followed "Mr. Block," a block-headed worker who fails to comprehend his exploitation, similar to Ryan Walker's "Henry Dubb."⁷⁶ Religious hypocrisy was another favored target of *IW* and *Solidarity*, both of which claimed Jesus as a "fellow worker." *IW*'s debut issue baited evangelist Billy Sunday when it asked, "We wonder if 'Billy' would have been among the disciples of Jesus when Jesus raided the cornfield, by direct action, when he was hungry?"⁷⁷ And a 1910 poem reminded *IW* readers that Jesus was a carpenter "whose words made systems, states and empires turn to dust."⁷⁸

Editors stressed that the newspaper belonged to readers. As did socialist editors, they asked readers to contribute stories, article ideas, and cartoons.⁷⁹ New editor Hartwell Shippey wrote upon the *IW*'s return to Spokane, "There are many scholarly gentlemen who are capable of sitting in an arm chair and composing a philosophical treatise on the sociological significance of the rise of the proletaire and similar glittering generalities. But no one but the MAN ON THE JOB can give a true account of the facts about that job.... And don't be afraid of your poor English if you have a piece of news to convey. That is what we are hired for."⁸⁰ By providing an opportunity for workers to participate in IWW print culture, *IW* developed a sense of community among its far-flung members. Eventually, however, the newspaper decided such insider information detracted from its mission to educate and recruit new members.⁸¹

Like its socialist counterparts, the *Worker* had trouble making ends meet. At the Spokane local's request, the IWW general executive board assumed half *IW*'s

\$628.18 debt at the end of 1910 in exchange for the title of publisher. The most significant change was that IWW members now elected the editor, so that in 1912 Walker Smith replaced Fred Heslewood. *IW* bragged it carried no paid advertising so was totally dependent on subscriptions sold by volunteers. Among the more innovative salesmen were two men on a tandem bicycle who sold the *Worker* as they cycled from Denver to New York.⁸² Their adventure exemplifies another way IWW print media enabled individuals to join Wobbly culture. Salesmen were motivated not by profit but by the sense they were helping fellow workers, like ten men and women who sold five hundred copies in a day and sent the proceeds to striking workers in Pennsylvania.⁸³

Celebrating the “Hobo” in IWW Print Culture

One of the IWW’s biggest cultural contributions was its introduction of the iconic “hobo,” who represented the stereotypical Wobbly. In the prewar years, hobos comprised an estimated half million migrants riding the rails at any given time. In a pioneering image makeover, *Bulletin* editorials lauded hobos as “the backbone of the IWW, the only true revolutionary in America.”⁸⁴ According to literary historian James Burkhart Gilbert, “a characteristic American type was now seen as a social revolutionary,” thanks to IWW depictions of the hobo “as a prophet in his own life, a man on the fringe of society, yet capable of seeing clearly to its center.”⁸⁵ *IW* championed this character: “The homeless worker—the tramp—from New York meets at the campfire with the man who has just escaped from the chain-gang of Seattle. Their experience is the same; boundary lines are no longer those of East and West, of North and South, but of workers and shirkers, of master and slave; of have all and have nothing.”⁸⁶

Solidarity and the *IW* catered to this neglected audience by celebrating migratory workers’ unsung role as producers upon whose backs capitalists rode roughshod. “The blanket stiff is scorned in some quarters, but without him the railroad could not be reaped,” an editorial asserted.⁸⁷ “The March of the Hungry Men” was among many poems extolling tramps.⁸⁸ More mundane features targeting the elusive migrant audience included a “Mail List” that notified individuals when locals were holding mail for them. *Solidarity* editor Ben Williams recalled these footloose fellow workers did not linger long on his staff. “After training one to a tolerable state of a press feeder or bookkeeper, he would ‘blow,’” Williams rued.⁸⁹ *IW* celebrated the liberating aspects of hobo life, like a rollicking account sent in by a group of Wobblies hopping freight cars from San

Francisco to a Denver freespeech fight: “We intended to get off at Littleton, 10 miles from Denver, but that train fanned through there like a bat out of the devil’s boarding house. It is now a battle of wits. Brakes were set, she stops, we unload and scatter to the four winds. Sixty are captured by as many cops. City police far from city limits. The battle of plenty against that of want. But all are not caught. Twenty or more reach Denver.”⁹⁰

Many Wobblies read the *Worker* in the “jungle,” hobo parlance for a camp by a river where transients could wash, cook, and sleep. Beyond the IWW local hall, jungles offered migrants “the only social break in the harsh search for work,” according to Carleton Parker, who interviewed many of them.⁹¹ “The ‘jungle’s a sylvan glade—a place of rest and refreshment,” *IW* explained of these transient communities. One group mailed \$3.05 from Washington.⁹² One article half-jokingly suggested creating a Baedeker’s guidebook to the jungles to tip off “bindle stiffs” on the locations of “bulls” [railroad guards] and kind farmers.⁹³ The next month, a columnist set out to provide such advice for the Northern Pacific rail route. Ritzville’s jungles were at the fairground a mile west of town, it advised: “Chewings are fair in Ritzville. Try to make them believe you are German.”⁹⁴ A short-lived 1910 feature published briefs from across the West. From Bristol, Idaho:

Fellow Worker:

We landed in the burg last Friday and stooped off for the harvest. Crops are not very good. Plenty of men. Wages \$2.50 and board; sleep in house; good bed.... Sentiment for the I.W.W. pretty strong among the harvest hands. Mostly floaters, only a few scissorbills. Yours for the I.W.W.

John Hankin and William Love⁹⁵

Legendary Wobbly songwriter and poet Joe Hill celebrated these hobos as proletarian heroes and added a revolutionary edge to the American romance with vagabondism. IWW journals often published verse by the Swedish immigrant, who was something of a radical Johnny Appleseed, tramping the nation in search of work and organizing labor. Hill joined the IWW in 1910 while working on the California waterfront, where he composed Wobbly tunes for the piano, violin, banjo, or guitar. “It’s a Long Way Down to the Breadline” and “Rebel Girl,” based on Flynn, were among beloved IWW tunes that formed the backbone of the organization’s *Little Red Songbook: Songs to Fan the Flames of Discontent*. Hill also drew satirical cartoons for *IW* and *Solidarity*, often under a pseudonym, and his song “Mr. Block” celebrated the comic strip. Fans mourned when he was

executed in Utah in 1915 for a murder many believed he did not commit.⁹⁶ *Solidarity* rallied workers to defend Hill, and a Chaplin cartoon portrayed the stock porcine capitalist as Hill's executioner.⁹⁷ Hill became a martyr in movement memory.

The Role of IWW Journals in Supporting Strikes

Strike accounts dispel any notion that IWW organs were simply literary journals.⁹⁸ They almost always were the only media that told the Wobblies' side of labor strife, providing another vital social movement media function. As a 1910 *IW* account pointed out, during one direct action, "The press—the capitalist press—is closed to the striking cooks and waiters of Spokane."⁹⁹ Besides championing those unskilled urban workers, IWW was possibly the first organization to show interest in the welfare of lumberjacks, whose working and living conditions arguably were the worst of any workers'.¹⁰⁰ The Washington-based *Worker* exposed abysmal conditions in Pacific Northwest logging camps.¹⁰¹ Dehumanized as "timber beasts," the men lived in long, wooden bunkhouses with rows of straw-filled bunks lining the walls. Outdoor open pits served as toilets; washing facilities usually were nonexistent.¹⁰² Mainstream media were mouthpieces for the timber barons, and timber workers' campaigns to organize suffered many setbacks in the 1910s. *IW* hung on to provide a voice for the lumberjacks and lend the strikers' moral support. One small comfort during the IWW's disastrous autumn of 1917 was that timber workers in the Northwest finally won the eight-hour day for which they had struck all summer.¹⁰³

IW also served as an important tool for fund-raising and rallying spirits. In the midst of the big steelworkers strike in McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, it published a letter from the strike committee seeking donations.¹⁰⁴ It solicited aid for striking miners on Minnesota's Mesabi Range, wracked by arrests and murder. Send pennies, hold meetings, collect funds, stage demonstrations, it urged readers, citing the IWW slogan, "An injury to one is an injury to all."¹⁰⁵ The IWW also helped the Mesabi miners' *Strike Bulletin* counter the *Duluth News Tribune*, which supported the company. The immediacy of these one-page bulletins filled strikers' need for fast, accurate information that could not be met by the weekly IWW journals. *IW* empowered locals by instructing them in how to create bulletins. Foreign-language newspapers played a key role in

coordinating the Mesabi's many immigrant workers. During the strike, the Finnish-language daily *Socialisti* became an IWW publication, and locals also published an IWW paper in Slovenian. The strike was called off that fall, but the companies made concessions to raise and regularize pay and contracts. *Socialisti* endured until 1975.¹⁰⁶

Although *IW* was more influential in the West, *Solidarity* served as the IWW's official organ; the general executive board regularly financed it (but rarely interfered with its local management).¹⁰⁷ Williams's tenure as *Solidarity* editor, from 1910 until late 1916, was by far the longest of any prewar Wobbly editor. The onetime printer's apprentice had been an organizer for De Leon's Socialist Labor Party, which led him to organizing California loggers for the IWW. He soon gave up on the SLP's emphasis on voting and was elected to the IWW executive board in 1907. When his term ended in 1909, Williams tramped to New Castle, Pennsylvania, to edit *Solidarity*, printed by the local socialist *Free Press*. The four-page weekly, which debuted in December 1909, was a "labor of love" for the two IWW locals that launched it during the McKees Rocks strike. Officials almost immediately arrested both the *Solidarity* and *Free Press* editorial staffs, however, on the arcane charge the former failed to properly state its publishers' names on its editorial masthead. The Wobblies transformed their trial into a direct action by representing themselves and refusing to pay their \$100 fines. Donations flowed in, and volunteers continued to put out *Solidarity* during the journalists' ninety-two days in the county jail. Editor Charles McCarty and the five press committee members surely served the sweetest stint in jail any Wobbly ever experienced, as they were allowed the run of the county jail and well fed by socialist women. "We laughed and grew fat, much to the chagrin of the authorities," Williams recalled. "DIRECT ACTION had scored another victory!"¹⁰⁸

Williams assumed the editorship upon their release. At the end of his first week, he received \$6 for expenses—and news that the bank account was down to thirty-nine cents. The next week, he donned his printer's overalls and set type himself to save money. Friction grew with the *Free Press* socialists as *Solidarity*'s printing bill grew bloated. A \$300 loan from a Wyoming fellow worker enabled the IWW to buy its own cylinder press and type so it could relocate at the end of 1910. Owning a press allowed the locals to launch the IWW Publishing Bureau, which printed about a million leaflets and one hundred thousand pamphlets over the next three years. Job printing supplemented meager *Solidarity* subscriptions but still failed to cover expenses, even when the operation's monthly income rose to \$500 after it moved to Cleveland in April

1913.¹⁰⁹ Still, *Solidarity* survived because it owned its own printing plant and because the versatile Williams juggled editorial and mechanical duties. *Solidarity* circulation probably never hit the hoped-for ten thousand copies, although it sold twelve thousand copies of its special March 2, 1912, Lawrence strike edition.¹¹⁰

The Press and the Lawrence Mill-Workers Strike

Journalistic voice never was more important than during the celebrated nine-week “Bread and Roses” strike of woolen mill workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, in winter 1912. The strike in the small city north of Boston, where thirty mills powered by the Merrimack River spun mountains of worsted wool, marked not only a milestone in labor history but also the IWW’s greatest victory. It became the site of an uneasy alliance between the direct-action IWW and New York’s political-action socialists led by Morris Hillquit that published the *Call*.

Technically, a thirty-two-cent cut in weekly wages ignited a spontaneous walkout by thousands of mill workers on an arctic January payday, when workers realized mill owners had withheld two hours of wages in response to a new state law that reduced the workweek from fifty-six to fifty-four hours. In reality, as historian Bruce Watson makes clear, the twenty-eight thousand workers, who represented fifty-one nationalities, were fighting for their lives. Weekly pay slouched in the single digits. Workers in the patchwork of ethnic ghettos made ends meet by cramming into dank tenement houses separated by dark alleys rank with garbage and raw sewage. The average worker died before age forty; others lost limbs in the frequent factory accidents. More than five hundred Lawrence babies born in 1911 never reached their first birthdays. Less than 10 percent of the workforce belonged to the AFL chapter of skilled workers, while the IWW mustered a mere three hundred recruits among unskilled employees. Mill owners counted on the polyglot immigrants’ differences to keep them divided.¹¹¹

The miracle of Lawrence was those workers stood together. Led by quintessential IWW organizers, bilingual Italian American radicals Joseph Ettor and Arturo Giovannitti, defiant crowds paraded, sang, and picketed on the streets. Brooklyn-born Ettor’s father had been injured in the Haymarket bombing, and Giovannitti was a poet who also edited *Il Proletario*, the IWW’s Italian-language weekly. When Flynn arrived, she girded women strikers to join

the picket line. The “Rebel Girl” showed sensitivity to women strikers’ dual burdens, overlooked by the IWW’s male leadership. She arranged women’s meetings and calmed husbands’ objections to their wives’ picketing. “The old-world attitude of man as ‘lord and master’ was strong,” she recalled. “At the end of the day’s work—or, now, of strike duty—the man went home and sat at ease while his wife did all the work preparing the meals, cleaning the house, etc.”¹¹² Demands included a 15 percent raise, double pay for overtime, and no retaliation against strikers. Ettor addressed workers in English and Italian; others delivered the same message in French, Polish, and Lithuanian: Shut down all thirty mills Monday morning. They did. The atmosphere grew uglier when the city summoned state militia to control the boisterous crowds—rocks were thrown, machines sabotaged—and a stray police bullet killed a female bystander. Ettor and Giovannitti were charged with her murder and jailed.

Predictably, local newspapers raked the strikers.¹¹³ William Randolph Hearst’s hysterical *Boston American* falsely reported that strikers threatened to dynamite the mills, precisely the mainstream misreporting that stoked Wobblies’ mad-bomber image.¹¹⁴ Strikers did receive solid support from Lawrence’s varied foreign-language press.¹¹⁵ Radicals of all stripes also rallied. *Mother Earth* appealed for strike funds.¹¹⁶ A supportive socialist press showed up. When the *Boston American* refused to publish reporter Gertrude Marvin’s sympathetic stories, she jumped to the radical papers.¹¹⁷ *ISR* sent Leslie Marcy and Frederick Sumner Boyd.¹¹⁸ Although the *Appeal to Reason* sent no reporters, it supported the strike, summoning patriotic imagery for what it deemed the “Lexington of Labor.”¹¹⁹

The drama drew a flock of reform journalists and mainstream reporters who were as appalled by the war-zone atmosphere as they were inspired by the workers’ spirit. Ironically, the popular press established the IWW’s reputation as “the spokesman for America’s impoverished, unorganized workers,” according to Foner.¹²⁰ Muckraker Ray Stannard Baker reflected in *American Magazine*, “I shall not soon forget the curious lift, the strange sudden fire of the mingled nationalities at the strike meetings when they broke into the universal language of song.”¹²¹ Mary Heaton Vorse’s *Harper’s Weekly* account and the accompanying photograph of soldiers pointing bayonets at strikers carrying American flags cost the magazine an American Woolen Company ad.¹²² Gilson Gardner’s United Press reports reached millions.¹²³ Left-leaning Lincoln Steffens’s reportage for New York newspapers reappeared in both *IW* and *Solidarity* after the strike concluded.¹²⁴

This polished journalism was a tough act to follow. The IWW's eastern *Solidarity* received reports from chief organizer James Thompson and telegrams from Haywood but was hampered by the lack of a fulltime reporter on the scene and the constraints of weekly publication. It reprinted coverage from the *Call*, which had the advantages of appearing daily and reporters on the scene.¹²⁵ A vivid account by the estranged *Boston American* reporter accompanied by photographs, for example, appeared in *Solidarity* a week after the event.¹²⁶ The western-based *IW* received dispatches from Flynn and a strike press committee, an entity the publicity-conscious IWW tried to set up at all of its strike sites. It sent editor Heslewood to Lawrence, the only time it ever dispatched him on a reporting assignment. *IW* also relied on other press accounts. On March 30, it reprinted Steffens's analysis of "The New Unionism" for the *New York Globe and Commercial Advertiser*.¹²⁷ The IWW was aware of its shortcomings. For one thing, *Solidarity* assistant editor Ebert pointed out, most Lawrence strikers could not read English and had depended on their various ethnic periodicals for strike information. He suggested the IWW publish a multilingual national textile-workers journal to fill the niche. He also acknowledged the superiority of articles in the capitalist press. "Who, among our own writers, has done anything as good?" he asked. Further, he said, positive press coverage was forcing the daily socialist press to give the IWW more coverage—and making IWW journals even less relevant as social movement media.¹²⁸

The daily *Call* did accord Lawrence voluminous coverage, but its motives were less than altruistic. The largest English-language socialist newspaper within hundreds of miles conveyed the alarming battlefield atmosphere in the timely manner only a daily newspaper could.¹²⁹ The January 16 front page screamed, "SOLDIERS BAYONET HUNGRY STRIKERS," for example, and a January 30 front-page photograph showed militia pointing bayoneted rifles at strikers.¹³⁰ An unarmed boy died when a soldier bayoneted him. Initially, *Call* journalists and IWW organizers complemented each other. Socialists provided most of the strikers' financial support, and the *Call* reported extensively on the brutalities; it even published a piece by Haywood, not long after editorializing against his provocative endorsement of sabotage in February's *ISR*.¹³¹

Soon, however, the *Call* froze out the IWW and framed the strike as a socialist operation. Its greatest publicity coup was a media-savvy campaign to send trainloads of mill workers' children to families outside the strike zone. Although the IWW organized the exodus, the *Call* framed it as a socialist effort.¹³² A page-one info box seeking host families explained, "The men and women are willing to suffer, though they cannot watch their children's pain or

bear their cries for food.”¹³³ The *Call* termed the children’s campaign an exciting new strike propaganda tool: “It gets under the skins of the respectable and bourgeois.”¹³⁴ The newspaper also maneuvered to use hunger as an opening to propagandize for socialism amid the IWW strike. “There has never been presented in this or any other country a program so drastically revolutionary as that of the Socialist party,” stated an editorial. “So great, so comprehensive is that program that the starving mill workers of Lawrence, as well as the better fed workers of other districts, must inevitably turn to it for relief.”¹³⁵ The IWW went unmentioned in that and other editorials.

A special February 15 *Call* strike edition provided another socialist publicrelations opportunity. Meta Stern, reporter for the socialist daily *New York Volkszeitung* and author of a *Call* suffrage column, interviewed New Yorker workers who took in children. One was a Hungarian carpenter and father of three who earned \$20 a week. “You, who speak of Socialism as breaking up the home, take notice that hundreds of Socialists, poor, hard-working men and women, are coming forward to give home to these unfortunate children,” she wrote.¹³⁶ Contributor Margaret Sanger, whose experience helping the IWW’s Flynn organize the children’s exodus galvanized her to launch her birth-control crusade, exploited maternal guilt. She wrote, “Picture it, mothers in comfortable homes, your little children crying for bread and you not able to feed them!”¹³⁷ Organized by Dolly Sloan, wife of *Masses* artist John Sloan, and *Call* journalist Therese Malkiel, one hundred socialist women hawked the fund-raising issue.¹³⁸ The newspaper and its backers arranged a parade of arriving children from the rail station to Union Square, where they were the centerpieces for a strike rally. The *New York Tribune* also recognized the children’s publicity value, especially after authorities physically tried to stop parents from placing their children on a train to Philadelphia in mid-February. The *Tribune* story demonstrated how thoroughly the *Call* had imprinted the image of Lawrence as a purely socialist strike. “The authorities at Lawrence, Mass.,” the *Tribune* stated, “are playing into the hands of the Socialists, who are directing the strike.”¹³⁹

The *Call* claimed full credit in mid-March, when Lawrence mill workers won hourly raises of 5 to 22 percent. By April 1, an estimated 275,000 New England textile workers received wage increases indirectly because of the Lawrence strike. The *Call* baldly boasted, “Behind the Industrial Workers of the World, who conducted this fight, there was the Socialist party, giving cohesion to their efforts, direction to their attacks, enthusiasm to their members, hope to all—and also practically financing the battle.” It attributed capitalist press attention to *Call* coverage and even appropriated the IWW’s creed of solidarity, saying of

strikers, “Through the solidarity that was made possible by the Socialist ideas, they stood together and they fought as a class.”¹⁴⁰ What most galled the IWW was its rival’s call for workers to vote. The Haywood ballot recall the next year gave the *Call* and the IWW journals plenty more opportunity for sniping at each other, and it never stopped, even as the federal government hounded them throughout World War I.¹⁴¹ Foner claims that despite the Socialists’ spin, Lawrence made “Wobbly” practically a household word. “One might not like the I.W.W.,” he observes, “but one could no longer ignore it.”¹⁴² Both radical and mainstream journalists recognized that the Lawrence victory’s greatest significance was it proved the potential of mass direct action in class struggle. The competition between the socialists and IWW, however, highlighted divisions that only weakened the radical agenda.

Ettor and Giovannitti’s murder trial became an international cause célèbre that extended the drama into fall 1912. *IW* played an activist role, urging locals to protest, write to newspapers, and soapbox.¹⁴³ Anarchosyndicalist orator Carlo Tresca trekked to Lawrence to mobilize Lawrence’s many Italian workers. On May 4, the IWW called for a general strike if Ettor and Giovannitti were not freed.¹⁴⁴ Five thousand workers singing “The Internationale” marched past the jail on May Day. A July 25 eight-page defense issue supplement sold twelve thousand copies.¹⁴⁵ The socialist press remained supportive. *ISR* published special dispatches from the trial. In the *Appeal*, Debs called for every socialist and labor paper to rally to the pair’s defense. Debs, publisher Julius Wayland, and editor Fred Warren, themselves on trial for trumped-up federal obscenity charges stemming from the *Appeal*’s investigation of Leavenworth prison, urged readers to prioritize Ettor and Giovannitti’s defense.¹⁴⁶ Meanwhile, Giovannitti’s reputation as a poet swelled as popular magazines such as *Atlantic* and *Current Literature* published his prison poems.¹⁴⁷ Finally, *Solidarity* headlined Heslewood’s account “ACQUITTED!” on November 30, 1912.¹⁴⁸

The Toll of Constant Struggles—and Squabbles

The victory at Lawrence, however, did not herald the arrival of industrial unionism or, as *ISR* predicted, the socialists’ virtual endorsement of IWW tactics.¹⁴⁹ Even as Charles Kerr typed his editorial, the Socialist Party was engineering its expulsion of Haywood. Sadly for the Lawrence wool workers, strike gains were short-lived. IWW policy forbade signing contracts; it

considered all labor agreements temporary until workers achieved their ultimate goal of taking control of industry and abolishing the wage system. That hard-nosed view promised an eternally escalating state of war, a vision that not only made industrialists apoplectic but also quickly exhausted workers, most of whom were satisfied with a raise or other benefits that gave them immediate relief. The IWW policy enabled Lawrence mill owners to gradually renege on their agreements. IWW membership plummeted in the year following the strike, as most Lawrence workers lacked the Wobblies' appetite for incessant class warfare. *Solidarity's* response to the *Call's* charge that Lawrence accomplished nothing was that workers gained experience. "Only through such constant struggles can the working class finally be brought to sufficient unity to overthrow capitalism," Heslewood wrote.¹⁵⁰

The IWW continued its constant struggle in Paterson, New Jersey, where more than twenty thousand silk mill workers struck in February 1913. Flynn soon arrived to do her usual double duty as soapboxer and journalist, penning for *Solidarity* fact-laden investigations on poor silk-mill pay and working conditions.¹⁵¹ Tresca, her lover, also rallied the largely Italian-speaking workers, who found more support in the city's *La Questione Sociale*. Club-wielding police met mass protests with massive arrests: nearly five thousand people, including Flynn and strike organizer Patrick Quinlan. The mayor banned outdoor meetings, critical to maintaining collective identity, so Sunday strike rallies moved to nearby Haledon, at the invitation of its Socialist mayor. The *Masses* blamed the local press for inciting mob violence against strike leaders.¹⁵² "Get Haywood," the *Paterson Press* urged readers. "Never mind the manner; don't hesitate at the method; don't bother about the means."¹⁵³

Solidarity increased coverage as picketing dragged into May.¹⁵⁴ Haywood chronicled the strike in *ISR*, and *Mother Earth* supported the "courageous" strikers even though it dismissed peaceful picketing as futile.¹⁵⁵ The most memorable piece of journalism to come out of Paterson was John Reed's *Masses'* account of four days he spent in jail after his arrest while watching pickets. When he was released, the Harvard graduate wrote of his cellmates, "They crowded around me again, patting my sleeve and my hand, friendly, warm-hearted, trusting, eloquent.... 'You go out,' they said softly. 'That's nice. Glad you go out. Pretty soon we go out. Then we go back on picket line.'"¹⁵⁶

The experience so moved the future chronicler of the Russian Revolution that he quit his day job at *American Magazine* to work with the silk strikers. His greatest effort was the elaborate Paterson Strike Pageant at Madison Square Garden, enacted on June 7 by 1,029 strikers before fifteen thousand

spectators.¹⁵⁷ The spectacle publicized the strike but failed to raise badly needed funds. Discouraged, desperate, and hungry silk workers returned to their looms in July with nothing gained after twenty-two weeks off the job.

Solidarity's silence on this dismal conclusion contrasted with its plentiful, optimistic coverage that a month earlier unrealistically predicted, "Bosses Facing Ruin."¹⁵⁸ The nearby *Call*, which gave more coverage to the Paterson strike than any other periodical, downplayed the IWW's role—until the strike failed. Then it heaped all blame on the IWW. Charges and countercharges in their pages revealed the gulf between the political Socialists and action-oriented Wobblies, which had come to a head with Haywood's recent expulsion from the Socialist Party. "The wind-jamming, hell-raising and hallelujah-shouting was done by the I.W.W. star performers," charged a *Call* op-ed piece. "But the real work, yes, the dirty work, which the loud-mouthed revolutionists would consider too bothersome, was done by Socialists." He charged that the IWW failed to support the local Socialist *Weekly Issue* by designating the *Paterson Evening News* its "official" paper and turning to its own "rabid anti-Socialist" *Solidarity* instead of the *Issue* for a second strike edition, which replaced the one police confiscated. Two years later, a *Solidarity* contributor opined that the lack of an IWW newspaper in Yiddish accounted for its lack of success in the New York area.¹⁵⁹ Reasons for the Paterson debacle went deeper, not the least of which was the entrenched power of the government-backed New Jersey mill owners. But rhetoric in the Wobbly and socialist press revealed divisions in the beleaguered radical social movement that only squandered precious energy. The two organizations literally divided themselves into the "we" and "they" that social movement media use to demarcate themselves from their oppressor. The failure to forge a group identity between the IWW and socialists highlighted the significant strategic and philosophical differences that fissured the broadly conceived radical movement. After Paterson, IWW organized no more big strikes in the East and retrained its focus on the West.

Back in Seattle, factional disputes over decentralizing power were destroying *Industrial Worker*.¹⁶⁰ The IWW lost its main communications tool in the West when *IW* stopped publishing in September 1913. It did not reappear until April 1, 1916, but new editor Tom Whitehead was quickly replaced by J. A. MacDonald, under whom it began to grow. Circulation climbed to eleven or twelve thousand by April 1917, and it became a semiweekly, with circulation of twenty-one thousand at the end of July.¹⁶¹ *Solidarity* also suffered from infighting, on top of chronic financial woes. Longtime editor Williams quit at the end of 1916 when Haywood moved the official organ from Cleveland to the

IWW's new Chicago headquarters. The loss of Williams foreshadowed a disastrous new year for the organization.

IWW Journals' Construct the "Hypermasculine" Wobbly Image

The organization never could shake its overblown reputation for violence, which held consequences both ironic and tragic for its rebel editors. "Wobblies did not carry bombs, nor burn harvest fields, nor destroy timber, nor depend upon the machine that works with a trigger," writes Dubofsky.¹⁶² Historian Aileen Kraditor's blistering assessment argues the IWW failed because the public associated it with violence.¹⁶³ Browsing both its journals, however, reveals dozens of articles that strive to disassociate direct action and sabotage from violence. Kraditor also neglects the pulverizing effect of official frame-ups and lies by corporate powers and hysterical media attacks on the IWW. A historian writing in 1939 pointed to the mainstream press as "the great motivating power which created through its news and editorial columns a distorted and vicious picture of the IWW. This stereotype provided the psychological stimulus necessary for the acts of violence against the IWW, their legal persecution and prosecution by the Federal Government, and the enactment of the state criminal syndicalism laws against them."¹⁶⁴

Nonetheless, it is true that IWW periodicals endeavored to cultivate a fearsome Wobbly persona that was all too successful in frightening the public. "When we speak of 'artists,'" a *Solidarity* editor once felt compelled to write, "we do not mean dilettantis, who put daubs on canvas according to approved rules, or actors, who feign moral qualities they do not possess. We mean MEN who live and act true to their convictions and their declarations."¹⁶⁵ In IWW parlance, to be manly was to resist the indignities and dehumanization of industrial capitalism. "*Don't Be a Peon—Be a Man!*" declared an appeal to Louisiana timber workers.¹⁶⁶ Historian David Roediger has noted the IWW's "hypermasculine" antiracism.¹⁶⁷ A 1916 *IW* story headlined "Lumberworkers, Be Men, Not Slaves!" asked, "Which do you want; servitude or manhood?"¹⁶⁸ The IWW equated intellectualism with effeminacy, evident in Mary Marcy's ridicule of a professor who criticized direct action, in a *Solidarity* essay headlined "Ladylike Men."¹⁶⁹ A favored *Worker* rhetorical strategy ridiculed foes as unmanly. Wobblies equated virility with radicalism. *IW* ridiculed socialist author Frank Bohn as "effeminate," "ladylike," and "sis Frank."¹⁷⁰ The

newspaper also taunted potential recruits, doubtless alienating some workers. “Their dumb worship of the law,” it once stated, “their humble adoration of the morality of their masters, their slavish subservience to the fetiches [sic] set up by the boss, politics, religion, patriotism, etc. has practically castrated them intellectually.”¹⁷¹

The Wobblies’ “deliberately provocative and irreverent language” antagonized the public, according to legal scholar David Rabban.¹⁷² *Solidarity* and *Worker* cartoons almost always constructed the Wobbly as dangerous and powerful.¹⁷³ A 1911 *Worker* cartoon, for example, showed a Wobbly wielding a studded club labeled “Direct Action.”¹⁷⁴ A 1917 cartoon depicted striking Washington timber workers squeezing their boss in a vise.¹⁷⁵ Shortly after the European war broke out, *Solidarity* portrayed the IWW as a submarine torpedoing a gunboat symbolizing capitalism.¹⁷⁶ Although intended as metaphors, the capitalist press and public interpreted at least some of this visual rhetoric literally. The exaggerated caricatures unwittingly contributed to the violent image of the IWW promoted by hegemonic media. The IWW did not rule out violence in self-defense and debated its use in its journals, which further confused the issue. A 1909 *Worker* editorial posited, “Any and all means are justified when it comes to a matter of life and death. Deliberate bloodshed must be condemned, but if we are to be shot like dogs, who will tell us to die without a struggle?”¹⁷⁷ Violence was not the “primary method” of the IWW, Foner and others assert, but the union’s rebellious rhetoric coupled with middle-class fear of mass demonstrations by the underclass made it easier for authorities and mainstream media to portray its members as murderous monsters.¹⁷⁸ By 1917, the IWW was alienated from all but a minute fraction of America.

A Growing Wave of Vigilantism

The super-patriotism that surfaced once the U.S. Congress declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, engulfed the IWW in a tsunami of legal and extralegal violence. Several months earlier, the famous freespeech campaigns had ended in a burst of bloodshed in Everett, a lumber town some thirty miles north of Seattle.¹⁷⁹ On November 5, the steamer *Verona*, carried 260 Wobblies up Puget Sound singing rebel songs, followed by 38 more on a second steamer, *Calista*. Several hundred armed police and deputized vigilantes awaited them at the Everett dock. The sheriff shouted they couldn’t land. “Like hell we can’t,” a

passenger replied. Shots rang out; some *Verona* passengers returned fire. The toll included 5 Wobblies and 2 vigilantes dead, 34 workers and 19 vigilantes wounded, 7 workers missing in the sound, and 294 men and women jailed. IWW journals exhaustively covered the Everett Massacre. *IW* listed the names, age, and, in some cases, occupations and hometowns of the dead and injured.¹⁸⁰

Visual rhetoric most vividly expressed *IW* outrage. On the January 20, 1917, cover, a bare-shirted, Adonis-like worker towers over a squatting, apelike beast that clasps a skewer full of the dead Wobblies' heads. *IW* also filled its front page with graphic photographs of Everett's five Wobbly victims. The nearly nude bodies lie in a row of cots in what appears to be a makeshift morgue. *IW* editors combined text with the Everett images to galvanize Wobblies. The boldfaced banner headline read, "DEATH FRUIT OF MONTHS OF LAWLESSNESS." The three-line subhead added, "Louder, Clearer, More Insistant [sic] Than Any Words Are the Call of the Dead Bodies of Our Murdered Fellow Workers." A text box in the montage asked, "Workers of America, what is your answer to the appeal of your dead? ... Will you do your share to defend your fighters? When?"¹⁸¹ Few answered the call, as seventy-four Wobbly survivors were jailed on murder charges. *Solidarity* and *IW* printed much trial testimony verbatim over several issues and gave the story huge play—possibly the most coverage the latter ever gave any story.¹⁸² Although it published no photos, *Solidarity* published a crude cartoon depicting the five victims' corpses.¹⁸³ It also reprinted Anna Louise Strong's sympathetic account of the trial for *Harper's Weekly*.¹⁸⁴ *IW* was ebullient when the first defendant was acquitted May 5. Eventually all were released.¹⁸⁵



This illustration portrays IWW speakers as more powerful and pure than the forces that killed five of them in Everett, Washington. *The Murdering of our Fellow Workers Must Cease*, *Industrial Worker*, January 20, 1917.

The Everett Massacre was part of a growing wave of vigilante violence against Wobblies. Historian Christopher Capozzola has discussed how longstanding American traditions equating citizenship with obligation mutated into extralegal violence and coercion in the years around World War I. Although Woodrow Wilson denounced “mob” vigilantism, public leaders and federal policy promoted citizen vigilance “as a valuable work of service and voluntarism that embodied American democracy.”¹⁸⁶ Commercial newspapers were, at the

very least, complicit in this unconstitutional activity. After masked men lynched IWW organizer Frank Little in Butte, Montana, on August 1, 1917, for example, local newspapers blamed the lethal attack on Little's antiwar speeches.¹⁸⁷ A study of Wisconsin newspapers during World War I found that although nearly every daily published editorials against lawlessness, some also seemed to incite extralegal violence. The Kenosha paper joked, "They are using tar and feathers against the I.W.W. agitators in Arkansas. Why waste perfectly good materials on those fellows?"¹⁸⁸

Conclusion

"Those fellows" made important contributions to the organization of disfranchised workers overlooked by the trade unions—unskilled European immigrants, African Americans, Hispanics, and women, as will be discussed in [chapters 8 and 9](#). IWW print culture educated the lowest rung of working Americans, in reading rooms and hobo jungles that also provided community for these frequently homeless workers. The IWW's multilingual newspapers provided voice for the nation's most oppressed workers. They also served as a repository of the organization's unique culture of struggle. Equal parts humor and outrage oiled the IWW's subversive message, not unlike the Occupy movement a century later. As the IWW's prime communications medium, newspapers were integral to the Wobblies' pioneering freespeech fights and battles for the right to organize. Information about conventions and labor actions connected migrant workers across the nation. Forceful critics of American economic hegemony, their prolific newspapers took a heroic stance against negative media frames that encouraged the public not only to torture and kill Wobblies but also to joke about it. *IW* and *Solidarity* crafted a distinctive image of the Wobbly as a footloose foe of an oppressive industrial order. Its newspapers also reflected the IWW's ambiguity about the limits of direct action and uses of sabotage, which doubtless undercut its campaign for industrial unionism. But mostly, the IWW fell victim to persecution born of a media-induced panic that served corporate and governmental interests.

Hegemonic powers mainly were interested in shutting down the IWW. When Chaplin reluctantly replaced Williams as *Solidarity* editor in March 1917, he was painfully aware that imminent U.S. entrance into the war held ominous implications for radicals. To avoid antagonizing the federal government, he and Haywood avoided printing any materials that might be deemed antiwar. They

removed the black cat logo that symbolized sabotage from *Solidarity* cartoons, nixed plans for an antiwar bulletin, and in May even dropped all references to sabotage.¹⁸⁹ Those concessions failed to appease the federal government, which stood ready to pounce.¹⁹⁰

CHAPTER SIX

ANARCHY!

IMAGINING A WORLD WITHOUT HIERARCHY

Freedom—absolute, unconditional, uninvasive freedom. That is Anarchy.

WILLIAM MARION REEDY, “The Daughter of the Dream”

■ Stella Thornhill was unaware she was being watched as she skinny-dipped in Joe’s Bay on a warm afternoon in July 1911. The bay carved an indigo thimble out of the sylvan Key Peninsula, which divides Washington’s southern Puget Sound like a camouflage boot stamping a puddle. Its frigid water soothed her arthritis. She was among members of the isolated anarchist collective of Home, Washington, who since its founding in 1896 had enjoyed slipping discreetly into the water *au naturel* during the all-too-short swimming season. Newcomers more attracted by Home’s cheap real estate than its utopian ideal, however, began complaining to police. Thornhill was among ten nude bathers charged with indecent exposure that summer. One complainant used binoculars to spy on the skinny-dippers; another climbed a small hill with her children to obtain a better view. Thornhill and four others were convicted and fined from \$65 to \$100. All appealed.

Jay Fox, editor of the local anarchist *Agitator*, pounded out an editorial castigating this assault upon Home’s founding ideal—the right to individual freedom. “The Nude and the Prudes” began: “Clothing was meant to protect the body, not hide it.” Home was “a community of free spirits, who came out into the woods to escape the polluted [*sic*] atmosphere of priestridden conventional society.” The editor had recently settled in Home with hopes for a quieter life than in Chicago, where as a sixteen-year-old iron-worker he had attended the tragic rally at Haymarket Square. Fox’s *Agitator* article concluded that those who had reported the nude bathers had “polluted mind[s]” and were “not fit company for civilized people, and should be avoided.”¹ Two months later, he

faced a misdemeanor charge of encouraging or advocating “disrespect for law.”² Home’s skinny-dippers found themselves clothed in the folds of the First Amendment during the free-press fight that Fox waged over the next three years.³

■ ■ ■

Although “anarchy” connotes violence and chaos, the antiauthoritarian philosophy is fundamentally a call for nonhierarchical social organization.⁴ “Freedom—absolute, unconditional, uninvasive freedom. That is Anarchy,” stated a 1908 essay in *Mother Earth*, arguably the early twentieth-century’s most influential anarchist journal.⁵ Anarchists abhor authority and centralization. They envisioned an ideal society without capital or state in which individuals voluntarily organized themselves in cooperatives. Mass industrialization was the antithesis of their utopia, which many conceived as pastoral communalism and a return to craftsmanship. Their rejection of hierarchy placed anarchists fundamentally at odds with religion, just as their inherent pacifism made them oppose the military. They revered nature and celebrated sex, railing at marriage as bondage by church and state. The anarchists’ revolutionary agenda was broader than the socialists’; it encompassed the private domestic sphere in addition to the public sphere of work and politics. Anarchy’s iconoclasm contributed to the cultural leap from Victorian America to modernity.

Blast editor Alexander Berkman, for example, cited Post-Impressionist painting as the essence of anarchy because both embodied “the conscious breaking of old fetters and constant striving for greater liberty.”⁶ In many ways, the communal-minded anarchists were forerunners of the 1960s’ hippies. Home, for more than a decade the most successful anarchist attempt at collective living, embodied the 1960s’ motto, “Make Love, Not War.” Topics related to making love, unfortunately, led to the demise of its newspapers. The occasional anarchist bomb—terrifying symbol of the most militant anarchists’ so-called propaganda of the deed—made pariahs of anarchists even among other radicals. But beneath its patina of polemical rhetoric, the real legacies of the prewar anarchist press are its anti-Victorian validation of sexuality and its fights for freedom of expression that helped shape modern ideas about both. Freedom was the main theme of the polemical antiauthoritarianism that characterized the anarchist press.

This chapter will examine how anarchist newspapers and magazines performed as social movement media. The periodicals profiled here demonstrate the diversity and intensity of the scattered prewar anarchist newspapers that struggled to survive after Haymarket. *Agitator* and other Home periodicals were

cultural products of new forms of human living arrangements and relationships between men and women. San Francisco's *Blast* (1916–17) belched fire on atrocities against labor and the looming war. New York's *Mother Earth* (1906–17) edified readers on the role of art in revolution amid withering critiques of capitalist and political institutions. (*Mother Earth*'s seminal role in the sexual liberation of the 1910s' "New Woman," especially the fight for birth control, will be discussed in [chapter 9](#).) St. Louis's *Regeneración* provided voice for exiled Mexican anarchists who sought to overthrow President Porfirio Díaz and redistribute land to peasants. The discussion on *Regeneración* will conclude with an appraisal of the radical press's counterhegemonic role in helping sway American opinion toward supporting the Mexican Revolution in the 1910s and in opposing a U.S. invasion later in the decade. Although the myriad subtleties of anarchism's varied threads are beyond the scope of this book, a discussion of its main strands of thought will help clarify the multilayered movement's principles and relationship to the socialists and Industrial Workers of the World.

Many Strands of Anarchy

Anarchist philosophy evolved from the work of French printer Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. His proposal in the 1840s to reorganize society into voluntary cooperatives contrasted to Karl Marx's call to nationalize land and industry.⁷ Although Proudhon was the first person to call himself an anarchist, for three months in 1833 American musician and inventor Josiah Warren advocated a similar system in a four-page weekly journal he published on a homemade press in Cincinnati. The *Peaceful Revolutionist*, arguably the world's first anarchist newspaper, explained Warren's vision of voluntary associations of individuals who owned property equal to the value of their labor.⁸ Both Proudhon and Warren were individualist-anarchists who valued individual sovereignty above all. Both supported the concept of small-scale, nonprofit private property. In the mid-nineteenth century, Russian Mikhail Bakunin (1814–1876) broke from Proudhon by rejecting the concept of private property. Bakunin also rejected the Marxist maxim that social revolution could be effected only through violence and required a temporary dictatorship of the proletariat (such as the 1871 Paris Commune) to oversee the transition to the cooperative commonwealth. His faith lay with the masses.

Bakunin's protégé Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921) developed the more revolutionary strand of anarchy known as anarcho-communism, which moved

beyond socialism by advocating the abolition of the state in addition to money, private property, and capitalism, in favor of common ownership of the means of production and direct democracy. Kropotkin, a respected zoologist exiled in England, pointed to nature's greatest successes as exemplars of mutual cooperation that should be the model for human society. His theory of mutual aid within local, independent small-scale communities and co-ops provided a practical framework for living that was absent from the individualist-anarchist branch.⁹ He simultaneously rejected the social Darwinist claim then in vogue that the theory of evolution justified economic survival of the fittest (i.e., the wealthiest); he countered that capitalism created poverty while promoting privilege.¹⁰ The foreign-language press brought anarcho-communist ideas to Americans, as evidenced in Johann Most's *Freiheit* in Chicago. Luigi Gallieni (1861–1931) exerted similar influence among Italian American anarchists through the equally incendiary *Cronaca Sovversiva* published in Barre, Vermont (1903–12) and Lynn, Massachusetts (1912–18), which sold a pamphlet on how to make a bomb.¹¹ Russian-born anarcho-communists Emma Goldman and Berkman were Kropotkin acolytes who made the important leap to speaking and writing in English.

Another strand of anarchist thought is anarcho-syndicalism, which focuses on labor. IWW organizer Carlo Tresca popularized this movement among Italian Americans, which is indicative of the bond between the social movements. The IWW's blueprint for a socioeconomic system owned and managed by workers was a form of anarcho-syndicalism, although the term did not catch on until the 1920s. Thus, *Mother Earth* and other anarchist periodicals supported IWW direct action. Wobblies disliked anarchist violence, however, and the anarchist emphasis on individualism was antithetical to the IWW emphasis on solidarity. Overlap occurred between the movements, though, which shared a common hatred for capitalism and authority.

Unlike the highly structured Socialist Party of America, the individualistic anarchists belonged to far-flung locals that only met in infrequent congresses. They were united mainly by a rich culture fostered largely through their periodicals. "As individuals who eschewed participation in the mainstream political process," historian Brigitte Koenig observes, "anarchists looked to their newspapers and journals as their site of political culture that linked a disparate group of individuals into a community and movement."¹² Several influential German-language anarchist newspapers in Chicago nurtured community among the largest concentration of American anarchists at the turn of the century.¹³ Three thousand miles away and twenty years before Home's anarchist

publishers, Benjamin Tucker (a Warren disciple) sustained an anarchist community among fewer than one thousand widely dispersed subscribers to whom he mailed his individualist-anarchist *Liberty*, first from Boston and later New York, for twenty-seven years beginning in 1881.¹⁴ Tucker educated readers in his belief that “if the individual has the right to govern himself, all external government is tyranny.”¹⁵ As a proponent of peaceful change, Tucker believed a key part of *Liberty*’s mission was to counter the violence espoused by Chicago editors like Most, which dominated anarchist publishing during the Haymarket era.

Media Demonization of Anarchists

The Haymarket image of bomb-throwing anarchists stuck with most Americans in the twentieth century.¹⁶ Anarchist Leon Czolgosz reignited antianarchist hysteria when he shot and mortally wounded President William McKinley on September 6, 1901. As they would with the IWW, mainstream media stirred a moral panic about anarchists.¹⁷ Nathaniel Hong’s study of 105 magazine articles’ treatment of anarchists from 1880 through 1903 concluded anarchists “received extensive and consistently bad press.” The demonization of anarchists exacted consequences. “The intense condensation symbol of the ‘anarchist beast,’ with its associations with hereditary criminality, anti-social insanity, aimless terrorism, uncontrollable chaos, and shadowy foreign intruders, negated anarchists’ critique of power, hierarchy, and economic inequality,” Hong concludes.¹⁸ A typical press comment was the *Louisville (Kentucky) Courier-Journal*’s admonition that “We do not wait to kill a rattlesnake until his deadly fangs have struck; we should not wait to take anarchism by the throat until it has accomplished its openly avowed ends of assassination.” The *Springfield (Massachusetts) Republican* called for closing down all anarchist periodicals and meetings and tracking all anarchists’ movements.¹⁹ The anarchist press found it nearly impossible to counter this assault on First Amendment freedoms and incitement to violence.

As was the case with the Wobblies, anarchist journalists’ affinity for fierce rhetoric added fodder to the media’s moral panic. The day before the McKinley shooting, Most’s *Freiheit* published a reprint of an 1849 essay, “Murder against Murder,” that advocated killing kings. He served a year in prison after he was convicted of publishing an “anarchical” article that endangered peace and public health.²⁰ In contrast, no such charges were filed against media mogul William

Randolph Hearst in connection with an editorial in his *New York Journal* attacking McKinley. Published just a few months before the shooting, it stated, “If bad institutions and bad men can be got rid of only by killing, then the killing must be done.”²¹ *Journal* political cartoonists routinely skewered McKinley as a stooge of the trusts, dressing him in the dollar-sign suit that symbolized capitalism. The powerful Hearst’s immunity underlines cracks in a judicial system that routinely targeted the radical press. Editor Most was sentenced to ten years despite socialist lawyer Morris Hillquit’s free-expression defense. As conservative a radical as ever saluted the red flag, Hillquit spent the next twenty years defending the First Amendment rights of dozens of despised radicals even when he disagreed with their beliefs. Hearst, however, was convicted in the court of public opinion.²² Readers who burned him in effigy and boycotted the *Journal*—which compelled Hearst to rename it the *American*. *Public Opinion* blamed McKinley’s murder on Hearst’s yellow journalism: “These are the wellsprings of discontent, class hatreds, and anarchy. Let us place the responsibility for this dastardly crime where it justly belongs. It is due to reckless, unscrupulous, unprincipled journalism such as has been seen daily in the pages of the *New York Journal*, the *Chicago American*, and the *San Francisco Examiner*, since William R. Hearst has controlled them.”²³

Hearst recovered to win a seat in Congress in 1902, but anarchists suffered, as media and the public lumped all radicals together as bomb throwers. Fearing a large Socialist showing in the 1911 election, for example, the *Arkansas Gazette* worked to discredit the state’s Socialist Party by associating anarchists with socialism.²⁴ Many socialist journals disassociated themselves from the movement. After McKinley was shot, *ISR* charged that useless anarchist violence only enflamed the public against anyone who advocated change. “Thus it comes about that over and over again the violent deeds of anarchists have been used as an excuse for attacking the only real enemy of anarchy—socialism,” wrote then-editor Algie Simons.²⁵ The *Call* once explained that socialists “quarrel with the anarchists, not because they spill so cheap a liquid as human blood, but because they spill it so unavailingly; they use so little judgment that they injure the working class and postpone the social revolution by their violence.”²⁶ The IWW, which should have been leerier of the media-manufactured anarchist stereotype, also criticized anarchist violence. “The gun as a substitute for industrial organization is a fatal illusion,” editorialized *Solidarity* in 1916, a statement in line with official IWW policy against violence.²⁷

When assassin Czolgosz proclaimed himself a disciple of Goldman, the

Buffalo Express suggested the thirty-two-year-old rising star on the anarchist speaking circuit be charged as an accomplice, as were the four anarchist editors hanged after Haymarket. Goldman was among several anarchist journalists rounded up by police but soon released. Her offense was an essay in *Free Society* that blamed capitalist greed for creating living conditions that inspired Czolgosz, whom she labeled a victim.²⁸ *Free Society* publisher/editor Abraham Isaak and contributor Fox, the future *Agitator* editor, also were arrested. Although she never was indicted, Goldman's essay generated so much ill will that she withdrew from the public arena.

The Comstock Laws and the Anarchist Press

Home residents also experienced fallout from the assassination. Days after McKinley died, the nearby *Tacoma Daily Ledger* rallied readers to "Exterminate the Anarchists," suggesting that every anarchist be killed "as a wild beast, a mad dog." Residents formed a Tacoma Vigilante Committee to hire a steamer to carry them to Home to wipe out the anarchists, according to the *Tacoma News*. Pacifying the vigilantes proved easier for anarchists than placating authorities that targeted their newspapers. On September 24, 1901, police arrested the publishers of the local *Discontent: The Mother of Progress* and charged them with violating Section 211 of the federal criminal code, better known as the 1873 Comstock Act, which criminalized the mailing of any material deemed obscene, lewd, or indecent. Named after antisex crusader Anthony Comstock, founder of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, the vague law criminalized virtually any discussion of sex and empowered the post office to delay or ban from the mail any objectionable publication. One clause extended the term "indecent" to "matter of a character tending to incite arson, murder, or assassination."²⁹

Congress added the incitement clause in 1908 at the behest of Theodore Roosevelt to silence the New Jersey-based Italian American anarcho-syndicalist newspaper, *La Questione Sociale*. Founded by Errico Malatesta in Florence in 1883 but banned in his home country, the paper's American version endorsed Malatesta's belief in direct action, including violence, if necessary, to bring about the social revolution. Roosevelt exclaimed, "The preaching of murder and arson is certainly as immoral as the circulation of obscene and lascivious literature."³⁰ An irate *Mother Earth* presciently warned that all publishers should be alarmed by the appointment of the postmaster as censor: "The precedent once

established, the Socialist press will have its turn, till finally the voice of *all opposition*, of independent, honest criticism is stifled.”³¹ The word “tending” gave postal authorities almost limitless power to suppress a wide range of dissident periodicals on top of their power to strip a journal of its second-class mail rates. Conviction threatened up to five years in prison and a \$5000 fine. The Comstock laws’ prudish, busybody approach to regulating morality was anathema to the anarchist view that “sex in itself is absolutely a work of the deity.”³²

The *Firebrand*, an influential anarchist newspaper based in Portland, Oregon, which focused on women’s rights and free love, martyred itself to challenging the Comstock laws in 1897 when it deliberately published Walt Whitman’s “A Woman Waits for Me.” All three editors were convicted.³³ The persecution suffered by Kansan anarchist Moses Harman further deterred potential challengers to the Comstock laws. *Lucifer the Light-Bearer*, the weekly that the soft-spoken farmer began to publish in Valley Falls, Kansas, in 1883, sought “to help woman to break the chains that for ages have bound her to the rack of man-made law, spiritual, economic, industrial, social and especially sexual.”³⁴ In June 1886, a letter to the editor that described a husband’s brutal rape of his wife brought obscenity charges against Harman that dragged on for nearly a decade. The author was a century ahead of his time in conceptualizing nonconsensual sex in marriage as a crime. In 1895–96, Harman served almost a year in state prison, on charges stemming from another letter to *Lucifer* in which a physician claimed he treated many cases of insanity or early death among wives raped by husbands. Harman was convicted again in 1905 for two *Lucifer* essays that argued women had a right to sex education and to choose when to bear children. At age seventy-five, he began serving a year in federal prison.³⁵ The Comstock laws also instigated *Mother Earth*’s first legal tussle when the post office refused to mail its January 1910 issue because it contained a Goldman essay on prostitution. *ME* contributor John Coryell called “Comstockery” the “arch enemy of society,” and Goldman scored its suppression of plays and novels.³⁶

Home Anarchists’ Fights for Freedom of Expression

Back in 1901, Home’s *Discontent: Mother of Progress* became one of the first periodicals to successfully defend itself against the Comstock laws. Since its founding in 1898, *Discontent* had established itself as “a forceful, articulate anarchist journal that addressed individual rights, cooperative living, and

especially sexuality and women's emancipation," according to Koenig, despite its thin national circulation, about one thousand.³⁷ *Discontent* framed the obscenity case against it as a free-press battle, and it received more than \$500 in donations for its defense. Its accused trio of editors was acquitted on the instructions of the trial judge, who found their free-love articles inoffensive. No sooner were they acquitted than neighbor Lois Waisbrooker, a septuagenarian anarchist-feminist, free lover, and nudist, was convicted on the same charge. Her offense was "The Awful Fate of the Fallen Woman" published in her monthly journal *Clothed with the Sun*.³⁸ Shortly after Waisbrooker's conviction, postal authorities shuttered the Home post office. *Discontent* shut down in April 1902. The next year, Washington State outlawed the publication of any material advocating "criminal anarchy."

Home's anarchist journalists turned these heavy-handed attempts to suppress them into a national crusade for free press and free speech. They launched the *Demonstrator* on March 11, 1903 (mailed out of nearby Lakebay), largely to promote freedom of expression. It published an eight-part series titled "Do You Want Free Speech?" and monitored nationwide infringements upon First Amendment rights, including post office harassment of radical periodicals, arrests of soapboxers, and criminal libel cases. "The paper acted both as a journalistic clearinghouse about the practice of the suppression of expression in America and as a focal point for those interested in the social recognition and political defense of free expression," according to scholar Hong.³⁹ The struggling *Demonstrator* also faced post office harassment and closed in 1908, just before a tardy Fox arrived to accept an invitation to be its editor.

Fox continued Home's free-press tradition after he launched the *Agitator* on November 18, 1910. He informed readers about censorship by recording freespeech battles across the nation in his front-page column, "The Passing Show."⁴⁰ Few of his contemporaries had as firm a grasp on the implications of the Constitution's First Amendment as did Fox, who educated readers about its guarantees. Like most radicals, Fox revered the idea of a free press as the public space where citizens debated social issues. He charged that criminalizing criticism made a mockery of democracy and "the most sacred charter of Liberty—the Freedom of Speech."⁴¹

An *Agitator* article about his arrest for "The Nude and the Prudes" reiterated his view, albeit a self-interested one, that freedom of the press was at stake: "If our writers and speakers cannot criticize decisions of the courts and point out the absurdities on the statute books without being imprisoned, all progress must come to a standstill, for it is only as mistakes of the past are discovered and

remedied that progress is made.”⁴² The jury returned a guilty verdict, and the editor received a two-month jail sentence.⁴³ The bright spot in Fox’s conviction was that it shined a national spotlight on the Jay Fox Free Speech Fight over the next three years as lawyers appealed his conviction all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. The campaign stimulated an embryonic social movement to put First Amendment rhetoric into practice.

The New York Free Speech League (precursor of the American Civil Liberties Union) campaigned against the verdict, the radical press rallied, and supporters mustered defense funds. Nonetheless, on February 23, 1915, the Supreme Court rejected Fox’s appeal. Civil order trumps individual liberty, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes stated in the unanimous opinion.⁴⁴ Fox served all but twelve days of his two-month sentence before Washington’s governor pardoned him. It would be several years before Zechariah Chafee’s seminal 1919 article, “Freedom of Speech in War Time,” began to sway Holmes and the court slowly started shaping a framework for the practical protection of First Amendment rights.⁴⁵ Anarchist journalists in tiny, remote Home helped sparked those protections in their vanguard articulation of the role of freedom of expression in a democracy.

Those protections came too late for the *Agitator*, which shut down November 1, 1912. Fox launched the short-lived *Syndicalist* but moved it to Chicago.⁴⁶ Despite the efforts of Haymarket widow Lucy Parsons and others, however, Chicago never regained its position as the hub of English-language anarchist journalism. That distinction fell to New York, thanks to Goldman, whom J. Edgar Hoover described as the “most dangerous woman in America.”⁴⁷

The Birth of Goldman’s *Mother Earth*

Five years after the McKinley assassination, Goldman was eager to return to the public arena. As a teenage immigrant, she had become increasingly radicalized while laboring at a Buffalo glove factory. After she moved to New York in 1889, fellow Russian-born anarcho-communist Berkman became her lover and mentor. Berkman perched on the far-left end of the radical spectrum. After the nihilistic university student was expelled in 1888, he immigrated to New York, where he became obsessed with the Haymarket martyrs. At age twenty-five, he resolved to kill Henry Clay Frick, president and chairman of Carnegie Steel, to avenge workers’ deaths at Homestead in 1892. He forced his way into Frick’s office and fired off two shots at close range before another man grabbed him. Although

Berkman still managed to stab Frick several times with a homemade knife, the industrialist seemed made of steel and survived.⁴⁸ Goldman helped Berkman obtain the gun but never was indicted. He served fourteen years in prison. The botched crime succeeded only in reinforcing the stereotype of mad anarchists. After his release, Berkman confined his activism to spewing fiery rhetoric against all forms of authority, first as editor of *Mother Earth* and then of his own blistering *Blast*.

Goldman blossomed as a radical speaker during Berkman's incarceration. Short, somewhat stout, her hair pulled back in a severe bun and her blue eyes intense as searchlights behind wire-rimmed glasses, the bookish-looking, egotistical Goldman commanded any stage or soapbox she mounted. Future American Civil Liberties Union founder Roger Baldwin felt electrified when he first heard her speak in St. Louis in 1911. "I'd never heard such a direct attack on the foundations of society," he recalled more than six decades later. "I became a revolutionist, though I continued to work at practical reforms."⁴⁹ Goldman had the same galvanizing effect on others. Her status among radicals rose from the year she served on Blackwell's Island in 1893 for encouraging an audience of unemployed workers to steal bread. Historian Martin Duberman described her as "a passionate opponent of traditional authority, a staunch feminist, and an eloquent advocate of sexual liberation."⁵⁰ The way she meshed celebrity and politics, spectacle and radicalism, made her "a model of the modernist principle of merging disparate phenomena," in historian Christine Stansell's view.⁵¹ Goldman longed to produce an anarchist magazine that would give her words permanence. "I walked on air," she recalled, when supporters raised \$250. "The spoken word, fleeting at best, was no longer to be my only medium of expression, the platform not the only place where I could feel at home. There would be the printed thought, more lasting in its effect."⁵²

The debut of Goldman's dense, tencent monthly in March 1906 "crystallized her public persona as mother of the movement," according to biographer Alice Wexler.⁵³ Her stints in prison and factories conferred a legitimacy that gave Goldman "power to render meaning" among Greenwich Village's middle-class radicals.⁵⁴ Goldman spoke and wrote in English and consciously shaped her anarchist journal's contents as American, further extending the magazine's reach. *Mother Earth*'s cultural influence reached significantly beyond its circulation of five thousand, according to historian Richard Drinnon.⁵⁵ Wexler elaborates: "[*Mother Earth* introduced] immigrant readers to American radical traditions and American-born readers to European libertarian thought. It was one of the first of the pre-World War I 'little magazines' to voice that note of

individual and social rebellion that distinguished the radicalism of the 1910s. And it influenced, as well, liberals outside the anarchist movement who were attracted by Emma Goldman's personal prestige."⁵⁶

The magazine was uncompromising. "We wage war against private ownership, the State, and the Church," *Mother Earth* asserted in 1912. "We condemn all palliatives and shams, like the participation in parliamentarism, the belief in the possibility of Harmony and fair play between the exploiters and their victims, the hope in protective labor legislation, and similar superstitions."⁵⁷ Goldman's two goals for the magazine were to "voice without fear every unpopular cause and to aim for unity between revolutionary effort and artistic expression."⁵⁸ She also determined to avoid getting bogged down in doctrinal factionalism, although the more militant a radical group was, the more she respected it. Berkman attributed *Mother Earth's* longevity to its independence.⁵⁹ Goldman credited "Yiddish perseverance and a boundless enthusiasm."⁶⁰

She needed it for the months-long, cross-country lecture tours that financed *Mother Earth*. Her topics included the theater, birth control, free speech, prostitution, and anarchists in other nations. Often her flamboyant manager and inconstant lover, Ben Reitman, a sometime physician to the homeless, accompanied her. His summer 1913 tour report recounted six weeks crisscrossing the West, beginning with two weeks in Chicago, three days in Michigan, two weeks in Denver, three months in California, a week in Portland, nearly two weeks in Washington, and a final stop in Butte, Montana.⁶¹ Goldman passed the hat at every lectern. Arrested at least sixteen times before World War I, she viewed prison as a crucible for radicals. "George, my young friend," she told *Appeal* reporter George Shoaf early in his career, "there is just one thing I wish you would experience before you go much further in your radical career, and it is this: I wish you might be arrested and made to serve one year in jail. That experience will either make or break you. If you emerge as a radical, you will be made."⁶²

More often than being jailed, she was denied the right to speak.⁶³ As authorities increasingly banned Goldman's appearances, the magazine's coffers suffered. Like other radical periodicals, *Mother Earth* begged in its pages for donations.⁶⁴ It carried no ads. Despite her need for money, at her talks Goldman also sought funds for freespeech defenses or other radical causes, like \$65 collected for the unemployed during the bitter 1914 winter. Even when in New York, she lectured most nights; between October 1913 and March 1914 she

conducted about 150 meetings. Half were devoted to economic and sex questions, the other half to modern drama.⁶⁵ Goldman's accounts for *Mother Earth* from the road, sardonically titled "The Joys of Touring," offer glimpses into its rigors. In 1908 in Washington, the Seattle meeting was a "muddle," Everett officials banned her, and Bellingham police arrested her and Reitman.⁶⁶ Another tour cost more than it brought in—\$165 versus \$113—delaying her plans to double the size of *Mother Earth* to sixty-four pages. She rued the lack of support: "As Anarchists we are under no mutual obligations, I take it."⁶⁷ Her descriptions of people and cities dripped sarcasm, as in this account of a train trip to St. Louis: "The temperature is that of a July day in New York. The Lord forbid that a window be opened; an uprising is certain to ensue; but as the passengers are all well behaved Americans, such a thing must not be. Besides, we Americans can stand anything, except air. We are ready to submit to any abuse, any imposition or insults, but air, fresh air! Never."⁶⁸

The tours also could be terrifying, as Reitman recounted following his near-lynching during a stop at San Diego during the IWW's brutal 1912 free speech fight. He wrote in *Mother Earth* what happened after vigilantes spirited him out of town that night: "I was knocked down and compelled to kiss the flag.... When I lay naked on the ground, my tormentors kicked and beat me until I was almost insensible. With a lighted cigar they burned I.W.W. on my buttocks; then they poured a can of tar over my head and body, and, in the absence of feathers, they rubbed handfuls of sagebrush on my body. One very gentle businessman, who is active in church work, deliberately attempted to push my cane into my rectum."⁶⁹

Before abandoning him, Reitman's assailants warned him, "We are responsible men, property-owners, and the police are on our side."⁷⁰ Ubiquitous violence against radicals and workers helps explain some radicals' endorsement of violence. Berkman responded in *ME*: "Anarchists and other social rebels will be forced, as a matter of self-defense, to answer violence with violence. Not because they wish it, but because driven by utmost necessity."⁷¹ Goldman added, "If San Diego is justified in violence, why not its victims?" She also appealed to the public to protest violence.⁷² It is a measure of the pair's courage that they returned to San Diego in 1913, although Reitman admitted feeling relieved when police plucked them up at the station and escorted them directly to jail. Within hours, a mob of five thousand gathered outside, hollering, "Get a rope, we want the anarchists!" Goldman canceled her lecture and welcomed the police chief's escort to the depot as the crowd chased them through the streets.⁷³

***Mother Earth's* Functions as a Social Movement Medium**

For Goldman, the magazine she called her “dear child” justified the risks. One of *Mother Earth's* main functions was to inform and educate readers about anarchism. The magazine translated and published essays by and about anarchist thinkers including Frederich Nietzsche, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, August Strindberg, and the revered Kropotkin.⁷⁴ Many long articles, such as “Economy as Viewed by an Anarchist,” explained the anarchist view of numerous fields.⁷⁵ One essay edifying readers on “Anarchism and Malthus” stretched over four issues in 1909. Following the examples of socialists Charles Kerr and Julius Wayland, Goldman created a publishing association to produce and distribute anarchist pamphlets and books, including Berkman’s candid *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist* after no commercial house would touch it. *Mother Earth* framed current events through the anarchist lens, which championed the individual underdog and opposed every institutional form of social organization. Political coverage was nonexistent save for savaging candidates and the process. While the downtown *Call* campaigned vigorously for the 1913 Socialist ballot, Goldman’s uptown *Mother Earth* instructed readers: “Don’t vote!”⁷⁶ She once wrote, “Electomania, America’s greatest malady, is far worse and more destructive than cholera.”⁷⁷ The electoral system, Berkman once explained, “creates and vitalizes all those fallacies that paralyze, stupify and deaden the intellect—so that the exploitation of the great majority becomes a task that has long been compared to that of taking candy from a baby.”⁷⁸

The journal did little original reporting, as it could not afford to pay contributors, but it offered commentary on every major social issue of the day in “Observations and Comments” as well as in feature pieces. It discussed prostitution, free speech, prisons, education, hunger, child labor, woman suffrage, birth control, and the European war that erupted in August 1914. As anarchist speakers and publications were favored targets of censors, *Mother Earth* devoted much energy to defending the principles of free speech and free press. Berkman was banned from speaking in Massachusetts in 1908, and Goldman from at least eleven places in May 1909 alone.⁷⁹ *Mother Earth* solicited and published donations to a General Free Speech Fund and worked with the Free Speech Committee and freespeech pioneers such as Theodore Schroeder. As in everything, anarchists were freespeech absolutists, indignant that it was a “crime to advocate the thing which gave birth to this republic: ‘The overthrow of government by force and violence.’”⁸⁰ Reitman claimed some success by 1911, however, noting Goldman’s successful fights to speak in

Chicago, Buffalo, Indianapolis, Columbus, and New Haven.⁸¹

The magazine backed workers in every big strike. It solicited strike funds for the Lawrence woolen-mill workers and supported Paterson's silk-mill strikers even as it dismissed their peaceful picketing as futile.⁸² (It termed the strike leaders' decision to go back to work without a settlement "disgraceful."⁸³) It challenged the persecution of radicals as far away as Japan.⁸⁴ The March 1908 "International Notes," another regular feature, included briefs on anarchist news from eleven nations on three continents.⁸⁵ The magazine also apprised readers of its frequent social gatherings that nurtured an anarchist community of kindred spirits. These events revealed a more congenial side of the take-no-prisoners anarchists' print persona: a midsummer's dance, fall concert and ball, Christmas Eve party, and *Mother Earth* anniversary party each March. Goldman's uptown apartment also served as a communal space for New York anarchists.

In accordance with its mission to "establish a unity between revolutionary thought and artistic experience," the magazine published many arts reviews, as well as Goldman's knowledgeable lectures on the social power of drama.⁸⁶ Goldman shared the Marxist faith in art as a weapon in the class struggle. *Mother Earth* contributors favored iconoclastic art, including Friedrich Nietzsche's essays, Richard Wagner's musical compositions, Henrik Ibsen's plays, Auguste Rodin's sculpture, and Maxim Gorky's poetry and novels.⁸⁷ An excerpt from Edgar Lee Masters's new *Spoon River Anthology* graced the magazine's cover in November 1915, as did an excerpt from Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" in March 1917. As *Little Review* publisher Margaret Anderson recalled in the 1930s, "I have never known a people more rabid about art than the anarchists."⁸⁸ Art reviews and essays in *Mother Earth* nurtured another overlapping community of cultural radicals by synthesizing politics and culture into an anarchist aesthetic that signified its followers belonged to the social movement.

Text-heavy *Mother Earth* published few illustrations, but occasionally popular cartoonist Robert Minor or other radical artists contributed powerful cover art. A 1916 *Mother Earth* Minor cover of a hand cradling the globe symbolized anarchist rejection of nation-states. Man Ray sketched a crude two-headed monster to portray anarchists' dual nemeses, capitalism and government, devouring "Humanity" for the August 1914 cover. Its primitivism anticipates his influence in the radical anti-art Dada movement. The month that the United States entered World War I, *Mother Earth* reprinted a provocative essay from the radical *Seven Arts* literary review on why war inspires no memorable music.⁸⁹

Another reviewer found the IWW's Paterson Strike Pageant at Madison Square Garden lacking sufficient revolutionary spirit.⁹⁰ As those examples indicate, anarchist reviewers favored serious and socially relevant fare.⁹¹

Mother Earth saved its sentimentality for hagiography of anarchist heroes. Its construction of anarchist history was a major part of its attempt to forge a group identity among its independent audience. The Haymarket execution anniversary annually produced eulogies, art, and essays.⁹² According to historian James Green, this "will to remember" constituted a secular religion for the atheist anarchists, which helped forge a common anarchist culture.⁹³ Besides memorializing martyrs, the magazine helped create them. It marked the 1909 execution of Spanish anarchist and educator Francesco Ferrer, for example, by placing his portrait on that November's cover (its first illustrated cover), and publishing tributes in verse and by Goldman and republishing examples of his work and last letters. The next November featured a second Ferrer cover, to commemorate the first anniversary of his death. In 1911, the magazine was instrumental in creation of the libertarian Modern School and Ferrer Center based on his educational views, which blended Goldman's ambition to combine social justice with the arts.

Another aspect of building group identity involved constructing enemies. Besides blasting industrialist and politicians, ubiquitous acerbic barbs stung socialists, trade unions, suffragists, and any other potential ally that in *Mother Earth's* eyes consorted with the enemy by participating in civic life. These reproaches, unfortunately, further marginalized the diminished anarchist movement. Goldman and Berkman missed no chance to swipe at socialist politician/publisher Victor Berger. Goldman sarcastically referred to the "Socialist Arcadia of Milwaukee" as she mocked its "revolutionary" clean streets, low trolley fares, and plans to tax dance halls. "Thus," she wrote. "Milwaukee will be purified by the old maid, Berger, and the virtue of Socialist morality."⁹⁴ Another article deemed socialists "authoritarian," and Berkman ravaged "Socialist cockroach politicians."⁹⁵ He ranted in 1910 against the AFL, "The puerility and blindness of the American Federation of Labor passes all comprehension."⁹⁶ All this picturesque name-calling may have furthered anarchist group identity by differentiating a moral "us" from the evil "them," but it also exposes the anarchist talent for making enemies. It also raises questions about the uses of radical rhetoric.



Emma Goldman's monthly magazine took on the anarchists' dual nemeses. Man Ray, untitled, *Mother Earth*, August 1914.

Berkman's *Blast* and Polemical Rhetoric

Berkman's rhetoric grew more heated in the *Blast*, which he started after he left *Mother Earth* in 1915 and campaigned cross country in defense of two men charged as accomplices in the 1910 *Los Angeles Times* bombing. The trip convinced him time was ripe for a revolutionary labor weekly. A hallmark of the *Blast* was its subversively illustrated covers. Lydia Gibson, one of the few female radical cartoonists, frequently provided art for covers, as well as poems, and Minor, her future husband, donated a few drawings.⁹⁷ A typical Minor cover

featured a pig in a suit tilting the scales of justice against a dozen workers hanging from nooses on the scale's opposite side.⁹⁸ But Berkman's invective was the *Blast's* main feature. "Ye are slimy mollusks," he wrote of labor leaders.⁹⁹ AFL leader Samuel Gompers was a "chicken-hearted labor leader."¹⁰⁰ Berkman and Goldman were as scornful of organized religion.¹⁰¹ He blamed the Golden Rule for "making slaves of us. It is breeding weaklings, mollycoddles, too spineless to resist."¹⁰² The *Blast's* anti-Catholic remarks finally prompted its printer to quit.¹⁰³

The printer's reaction recalls historian Aileen Kraditor's argument that another unlikely group for which radical editors expressed contempt was their intended audience of workers. "All of the radicals regardless of wing or class origin agreed that John Q. Worker was asleep and had to be awakened by his destined vanguard," she wrote.¹⁰⁴ *Mother Earth*, for example, described most people as "mere automatons, dull slaves of custom and habit."¹⁰⁵ In the *Blast*, Charles E. S. Wood complained, "Labor as a slave-class always is pathetically law-abiding."¹⁰⁶ Emanuel Julius sarcastically advised *Blast* readers, "Always be a working mule—it's so much fun to pile up wealth all one's life for someone else to enjoy, and then when one dies get one of those half-cent burials, which the undertakers furnish paupers."¹⁰⁷ These insults may have solidified group identity among existing anarchists who believed they had seen the light, but it is doubtful they encouraged many "mules" to sign on.



Nothing was subtle about Alexander Berkowitz's short-lived anarchist weekly, including this Robert Minor cover. *The Golden Rule*, *Blast*, January 15, 1916.

Berkman's *Blast* message invoked not only slumbering labor but also a slave metaphor, equally popular in the radical press. "We all agree that it is necessary to wake the sleeping," he wrote of the *Blast*'s mission, "to rouse the slave to a passionate hatred of his chains, to point the way of liberty and press, and inspire the courage and will to assert his manhood."¹⁰⁸ Besides objectifying and dehumanizing workers, Berkman's welcome note emasculated them. *Mother Earth* and the *Blast* frequently employed language of contested manhood, a timeworn rhetorical call to action.¹⁰⁹ Masculinity figured prominently in anarchist reactions to the transformation of May Day from a "Direct Action against capitalism"—a dramatic one-day walk off the job—into placid weekend

parades and picnics on May 1.¹¹⁰ *Mother Earth* called moves to tame May Day “emasculating” and an insult to the “manhood of labor.”¹¹¹ When Hillquit asked police to stop IWW speakers on May Day, the magazine jibed, “He was evidently of the opinion that free speech should be permitted only to the political eunuchs of the Hillquit and Berger stamp.”¹¹² After the federal government decreed the first Monday in September as the official Labor Day, the *Blast* responded, “Labor Day was castrated into obedient respectability.”¹¹³

Berkman’s ceaseless vitriol followed the polemical anarchist press tradition, captured in periodical titles such as *Blast*, *Firebrand*, and *Torch*. Berkman’s righteous anger was both his strength and his undoing. A century later, courts and history have vindicated his uncompromising stance against the decade’s many forms of oppression—state-sanctioned murder of strikers, imprisonment of labor organizers, censorship by the post office, British colonialism. The *Blast*’s incendiary calls for violence by the oppressed, however, could be as ruthless. “*The Blast* does not stand for ‘peace at any price,’” Berkman wrote. “It is in favor of war—war to the bitter end of the combined workers of the world against their despoilers.”¹¹⁴ As an example, the *Blast* applauded a \$1 million fire set by striking San Francisco longshoremen.¹¹⁵ Berkman never gave up the bomb, an image that remains horrific in today’s age of terror. He lamely blamed nebulous “society” for labor violence and did not seem to be speaking metaphorically when he wrote (and italicized): “*The Bomb is the ghost of your past crimes.*”¹¹⁶ Goldman was careful never to incite violence in *Mother Earth*, but the magazine defended proletarian violence as the byproduct of oppression. As Hippolyte Havel wrote in 1910, “Deep social causes must underlie the commission of desperate social acts.”¹¹⁷

Goldman and Berkman both appropriated patriotic icons to legitimize their revolutionary agenda. “George Washington would have been hanged as a traitor had the British gotten hold of him,” the latter wrote.¹¹⁸ Articles applauded the direct action of abolitionists John Brown and Wendell Phillips.¹¹⁹ *Mother Earth* claimed Ralph Waldo Emerson and Thomas Paine for anarchy and admired the Founding Fathers’ “long since decayed” spirit.¹²⁰ Such analogies were framing devices to portray capitalism as the corrupter of American libertarian ideals. Goldman and Berkman struggled to counter the media moral panic by framing anarchists as the true standard bearers of American freedom.

One unique branch of the anarchist press also espoused republican ideals. Newspapers comprised the main communications tool of U.S.-based Mexican anarchists committed to overthrowing Mexican dictator Díaz.

Anarchist Ricardo Flores Magón and *Regeneración*

Regeneración was the best known of a dozen transborder Mexican revolutionary organs published across the American Southwest and mailed to subscribers in Mexico. Cofounder Ricardo Flores Magón was “one of the most important precursors of the Mexican Revolution,” according to historian Norman Caulfield. Magón’s anarcho-syndicalist newspaper challenged the social order in both Mexico and the United States.¹²¹ Onetime law student Ricardo and his brother Enrique represented the more radical elements within the cross-class Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM), founded in 1901 to oppose the Díaz regime. The 1876 ascension of Díaz had launched more than three decades known as the Porfiriato, during which Mexico emerged as an industrial power, thanks to foreign capital. The wealth did not trickle down to the masses, millions of whom lived in virtual serfdom on large rancheros. Díaz enjoyed the support of American corporations that by the early twentieth century held significant financial interests in Mexican mining, oil, timber, and agricultural industries. The nationalist PLM platform demanded an end to foreign domination of the Mexican economy and the return of land and resources to Mexico’s poor. Díaz promptly shut down *Regeneración* and imprisoned the brothers.

Upon their release in 1902, the brothers fled north, and they regrouped with compatriots in 1905 in St. Louis, where the exiles established a PLM faction known as the *Magónistas* and resurrected *Regenaración* as its organ. Columns in English and Italian in the Spanish-language journal testify to the group’s vanguard transnationalism. They looked to Mexico’s indigenous tribes as models for the anarchist cooperative society they envisioned. “Communism has been practiced in the rural huts; authority has not been missed,” Magón wrote. “Life was more tranquil in those places where laws were not known nor the threat of the gendarme with his club.”¹²² The Magónistas turned toward direct action and class war and worked with the anarcho-syndicalist IWW, while the main PLM in Mexico shifted toward reform socialism. As *Regenaración* circulation inched to twenty thousand and Magónista PLM clubs sprang up across Arizona Territory, California, and the Sonoran desert, the United States grew more anxious about cross-border Bolshevism. The nation’s “persistent prejudice” toward Mexicans as lazy, mercurial, and violent factored into the American view of the embryonic revolution, according to historian John Britton. “U.S. media were filled with derogatory depictions of Mexico and its people.”¹²³

In June 1906, armed guards that included hundreds of Arizona Rangers killed at least twenty workers during a strike at Cananea, a huge U.S.-owned

Sonoran copper mine along the mineral-rich Sierra Madre that dipped into the same multiethnic transborder labor pool as did Arizona mining towns such as Bisbee and Jerome. Sheriffs and private deputies raided *Regeneración's* St. Louis office at the behest of copper magnate William Greene. His \$2500 criminal libel suit against the editors marked the beginning of a decade-long U.S.-Mexican campaign against the PLM. A private detective paid by the Mexican government arrested fugitive Ricardo and two colleagues on August 23, 1907, in Los Angeles, where they had resurrected the Magónista journal as *Revolución*. American radical editors took up their defense against federal charges of breaking neutrality laws that forbade inciting hostile expeditions from U.S. soil against friendly nations.¹²⁴ Socialist, anarchist, and IWW organs were virtually the only news media to frame the Mexican Revolution in its early years as anything other than a threat to the U.S. nation-state.

American Radicals and the Mexican Revolution

American radicals found irresistible the anarcho-syndicalist Mexican revolutionaries' siren call to return land to peasants from capitalist industry and wealthy plantation owners: "*Tierra y Libertad!*" Radicals saw the peons' struggle as analogous to American colonists' own Revolutionary War against tyranny. The radical press linked oppression of Mexican's poor to American capital and framed it as a betrayal of republican values. It was largely responsible for injecting borderland conflicts into American discourse on labor and land issues. Socialist journals—including *Appeal to Reason*, *ISR*, *Progressive Woman*, and even the gradualist *Milwaukee Leader* and *New York Call*—supported the Mexican Revolution in the 1910s.¹²⁵

Between 1906 and 1910, however, U.S. authorities in several states seized at least ten *revoltoso* newspapers, attached their property, and arrested their editors, according to historian William Dirk Raat.¹²⁶ One of them was Antonio de P. Araujo, editor of an anti-Díaz newspaper in Waco, Texas, convicted of violating neutrality law and imprisoned at the federal facility in Leavenworth, Kansas. *Appeal* editor Fred Warren, whose own looming incarceration likely increased his empathy for fellow editor Araujo, claimed that prisoner "No. 6307's" only crime was that "he dared speak out against tyranny and despotism."¹²⁷ Between 1906 and 1916, the U.S. government mobilized military force, the post office, state police, and the courts to suppress revoltosos and protect American capital and markets in Mexico. The neighboring nations also teamed up to use

extralegal means to suppress revolt, which included shutting down newspapers, seizing their property, and arresting, kidnapping, spying on, and deporting editors. The Mexican government enlisted U.S. aid by emphasizing that the revolutionaries were anarchists.

American radical journals challenged the notion that hegemonic news media provided neutral coverage of the brewing revolution. After Magón's arrest, for example, the *Call* pointed out media moguls' conflicts of interest. Hearst owned extensive industrial enterprises in Mexico, and *Los Angeles Times* publisher Harrison Gray Otis received a gift of two hundred thousand acres from the Mexican government.¹²⁸ *Appeal to Reason* published a barrage of reports that lionized the Magón brothers as Mexican patriots.¹²⁹ Eugene Debs condemned the U.S. government prosecution as a betrayal of immigration—"the most sacred of American traditions." He likened the brothers to the pantheon of American patriotic icons: "They are criminals in precisely the same sense in which Paine, Franklin, Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and Nathan Hale were criminals in 1776.... But these are days of Rockefeller, not Jefferson; Morgan, not Paine; Carnegie, not Kosciuszko."¹³⁰ In the *Appeal*, William Haywood likened the trio's trials to his own; that publication threw itself into campaigning for the Mexican revolutionaries with the same fervor that had helped acquit Haywood of murder in Idaho.¹³¹

The similarity grew stronger shortly before Magón's trial began in spring 1909, when the *Appeal's* Shoaf pranced into Mexico to investigate U.S. complicity in the Díaz dictatorship. His reports bore headlines like "Uncle Sam Becomes Slave Driver."¹³² The *Appeal* also published in Spanish one of its trademark mega-circulation special editions on the trial, which it distributed across the Southwest. In its inimitable fashion, a front-page overline quoted the brothers, who had been forbidden the newspaper: "We Can't Read the *Appeal to Reason*." A boldface note publicizing Shoaf's assignment employed the *Appeal* template for mobilizing readers by urging them to join the fight to "WIN as we did in the Moyer-Haywood contest." It ended, "Come, comrades, it's up to you. We are doing our part—will you help?"¹³³ Shoaf claimed he wangled an interview with the Magón brothers by threatening the federal district attorney with the power of the *Appeal* to rouse readers alerted to the fact he was holding prisoners incommunicado.¹³⁴ *Mother Earth's* Reitman for months tried to interview Magón in the Tucson jail.

A handful of socialists convened in Tucson to launch a monthly magazine, the *Border*, to "broadcast the truth about the Díaz regime, and to fight for the Mexican refugees," according to Ethel Duffy Turner. The wife of socialist

journalist John Kenneth Turner, now working undercover in Mexico, joined the publishing venture conceived by *Call* reporter John Murray, who was investigating the oppression of Mexican peasants. The *Border* was financed by Elizabeth Darling Trowbridge, a twenty-eight-year-old refugee from a wealthy Boston family who was in love with Magónista Manuel Sarabia.¹³⁵ The monthly, apparently the first English-language periodical devoted to border issues, appeared only four times before its office was ransacked. Trowbridge, who ignored a family emissary dispatched to fetch her home, hired lawyers for the trio of defendants and greeted them at the Tucson train station with big bouquets when they arrived on March 4, 1909.¹³⁶

When the trial opened in Tombstone on April 26, 1909, the press, supporters, and curious onlookers descended on the dusty little town famous for the legendary 1881 shootout at the OK Corral, symbol of the struggle for law and order in the Wild West. Arizona newspapers sided with the prosecution against what Tucson's *Arizona Daily Star* called the "anarchist agitators." The *Appeal* charged that the jury comprised "thugs and gun men" of the Copper Queen Mining Company in nearby Bisbee. It may have exaggerated its claim that the jury was rigged, but no jurors were of Mexican descent.¹³⁷ The jury returned a guilty verdict, and the judge sentenced the trio to eighteen months in federal prison. While Magón lingered in prison, liberal reformer Francisco Madero seized upon the PLM's momentum. He emerged as Mexico's new leader in the cross-class, nationalistic movement that temporarily gelled to finally oust Díaz in May 1911.¹³⁸ PLM Magónistas and Maderistas soon split over tactics. Although distinct from the PLM, Pancho Villa's rebel forces in northern Mexico and Emiliano Zapata's in southern Mexico supported the PLM's land-and-liberty platform. Madero's assassination following a U.S.-supported coup by Victoriano Huerta in 1913—ousted the following year by Venustiano Carranza—ignited a complex and sometimes contradictory civil war of shifting alliances among competing factions of constitutionalists, anarchists, and upper-class nationalists that roiled Mexico into the 1920s.

John Kenneth Turner's *Barbarous Mexico*

Although the radical press, led by the *Appeal*, could not free Magón, it did begin the shift in American public opinion toward the revoltosos. Just as Magón was arriving in Tucson, *ISR* published Murray's riveting *Call* series about Mexican peasants' oppression. Murray was another socialist scion of a wealthy family—

New York's Murray Hill is named for them—dedicated to the cause. A haunting photograph claiming to show the decaying corpses of six striking miners hanging from a tree in Sonora accompanied one installment.¹³⁹ After Magón's conviction, the *Call* and *Appeal* published his damning report, "Mexico—The Workers' Hell."¹⁴⁰

John Kenneth Turner documented that hell in an exposé of Mexican oppression by traveling undercover among its plantations, much as he would slip through mine country under military rule in West Virginia for the *Appeal* several years later. Turner "did more than any other American to discredit Díaz in the eyes of the American public," according to scholar Diana Christopulos.¹⁴¹ The *Appeal* published his compelling 1910 exposé, "Barbarous Mexico," after muckraking *American Magazine* dropped the popular but controversial series that implicated American capital in brutality against workers.¹⁴² In a 1911 story republished in *ISR* that began succinctly, "The United States is a partner in the slavery of Mexico," Turner laid out how American corporations controlled Mexico.¹⁴³

The colorful Turner joined as well as covered the revolution. He ran guns and ammunition into Baja California during a failed uprising there in 1910–11.¹⁴⁴ His tendency toward embellishment occasionally spiced his reports. In 1913, he wrote editor Warren that he was facing execution inside a Mexican prison because of his *Appeal* exposés.¹⁴⁵ Besides generating several lurid *Appeal* headlines, Turner's claims set off a flurry of telegrams between Warren, Arizona senator Henry Ashurst, the State Department, Mexican officials, and the American ambassador to Mexico. The latter concluded, "Turner has never been in the slightest danger of any kind or of execution."¹⁴⁶ Kerr's publishing house printed the American edition of Turner's book, *Barbarous Mexico*, originally published in London, which prompted congressional hearings that led to the early release of Magón and his two colleagues.¹⁴⁷ The book's photographs and text inspired *ISR* cover designer Ralph Chaplin to move to Mexico City, where he often visited Turner's studio. The Magón brothers became Chaplin's "personal heroes," and his reports to Kerr upon his return to Chicago nearly two years later strongly influenced *ISR*'s support of the Mexican anarchists.¹⁴⁸

The Resurrection of *Regeneración*

The defiant PLM added an English section when it resumed publishing

Regeneración with recently released Ricardo Magón back as editor in Los Angeles on September 3, 1910. The PLM smuggled much of *Regeneración*'s twenty-one thousand press run into Mexico. "Three years of forced labor in the penitentiary have but tempered our character like steel," announced the inaugural editorial. "The lash whips us into rebellion, not into submission."¹⁴⁹ The U.S. government pounced again in Los Angeles shortly after Madero took control in Mexico, however, and locked up Magón and ten other PLM editors and speakers in July 1911. Convicted a second time of violating U.S. neutrality laws, Ricardo received a twenty-three-month sentence, as did Enrique.

Magón's second legal battle found the anarchist *Mother Earth* the most vocal PLM supporter among radical periodicals. Its August 1911 cover appealed for Magón defense funds, and it printed the PLM manifesto in 1912.¹⁵⁰ It also published anarchist Voltairine de Cleyre's powerful essays on the devastating effect of industrialization on Mexico's native peoples. Born poor in 1866 in rural Michigan, de Cleyre descended on her mother's side from a New England abolitionist family, and her French-born father named her after the novelist. A convent school education alienated her from Christianity, and the Haymarket executions converted her to anarchism. De Cleyre wrote for many anarchist publications, beginning in 1890, and began contributing to *Regeneración* in 1911.¹⁵¹

De Cleyre played an important role in another theoretical clash, played out in anarchist, socialist, and IWW journals, that highlights significant differences among the radicals. Debs claimed in the July 1911 *ISR* that the PLM's anarchist-influenced, direct-action techniques risked the slaughter of the Mexican masses, which he called "ignorant, superstitious, unorganized, and all but helpless in their slavish subjugation."¹⁵² Debs's view, which reflected the mushrooming Socialist conflict over political versus direct action, roused the anarchist press. De Cleyre satirized his condescending characterization of Mexicans to reframe the debate. She sang the praises of "these heroic strugglers, no matter how ignorant they are, who have raised the cry, Land and Liberty, and planted the blood-red banner on the burning soil of Mexico."¹⁵³ From Home, Washington, Fox similarly drubbed Debs, writing in the *Agitator*, "The 'ignorant' peons will not trade their guns for socialist tracts."¹⁵⁴ *Mother Earth*'s Berkman called the socialists "cowardly."¹⁵⁵ Debs defended himself in the *Appeal*, claiming socialists were early and stalwart supporters of the Magóns. But he did not back down from his belief that peasants "in their present ignorant and unorganized state" would be "slaughtered like sheep" in a failed revolution unless the PLM initiated economic organization and political education.¹⁵⁶

Solidarity editor Ben Williams also refused to support the post-Madera agrarian rebellion even though the PLM had close ties to the IWW. The editor of the organization's Spanish-language miners' organ, *La Union Industrial*, in fact, was arrested by federal authorities in Phoenix in 1912 because of his PLM ties.¹⁵⁷ In 1913, Williams argued the rebels' agrarian policy of returning land to small farmers was doomed because it neglected urban factory workers and miners. The lack of cross-industry solidarity stymied direct action, Williams charged, and individual land redistribution would make farmers more vulnerable to the corporate forces already swallowing American family farms.¹⁵⁸ Nonetheless, *Solidarity* opened its columns to those who supported the PLM.¹⁵⁹ And *Solidarity*'s criticisms contained none of the racism spouted by a surprising source, avowed socialist Jack London, who declared Mexican natives and mestizo "half-breeds" incapable of self-governance. "They are what a mixed breed always is—neither fish, flesh, nor fowl," he wrote in *Collier's* in 1914. "Like the Eurasian, they possess all of the vices of their various comingled bloods and none of their virtues."¹⁶⁰ The article alienated many socialists from London, who quit the party in 1916 shortly before his death.

The Radical Press's Watchdog Role in Mexico

Border tensions escalated before U.S. entrance into World War I diverted attention to Europe. Until then, the radical press played a watchdog role in questioning increasing U.S. militarism along the border. The *Call* credited itself with stopping an American invasion in 1911 when President William Howard Taft sent American troops to the border, although it is unclear that was his intent.¹⁶¹ *Wilshire's* magazine charged the meddlesome president would have been a Tory had he been around in 1776.¹⁶² Freshman congressman Berger introduced a resolution demanding Taft document for Congress the reasons for the deployment; soon after he presented a petition, bearing one hundred thousand names, calling for the troops' removal. John Reed, stirred by his initiation into radical journalism in the Paterson jail, rode with Villa's army for four months in 1913. His richly descriptive and romanticized accounts for *Metropolitan Magazine* and the *New York World* were the first sympathetic accounts of the revolution to appear in mainstream media. They earned Reed a national reputation when republished as *Insurgent Mexico*.¹⁶³ In Texas, the state Socialist Party's *Hallettsville Rebel* held up the Zapatistas as role models for tenant farmers and adopted the PLM slogan "Land and Liberty."¹⁶⁴

War with Mexico seemed a real possibility when a U.S. navy ship shelled Veracruz on April 23, 1914, killing nineteen Americans and injuring more than one hundred civilians.¹⁶⁵ *ISR*, *New Review*, and *National Rip-Saw* were among the radical journals that countered mainstream media cries for war during the ensuing seven-month occupation.¹⁶⁶ Socialists cranked out 155,000 copies of a special *Party Builder* antiwar edition that labeled the incident a pretext to take over Mexican mines and land.¹⁶⁷ In a preview of radical arguments against World War I, *Mother Earth* appealed to American workers to align with Mexican workers instead of the U.S. government and the capitalists that the journal charged drove President Wilson's foreign policy. Another cross-border clash occurred in 1916, when U.S. soldiers crossed the border to capture Villa, whose forces killed several residents in a raid on Columbus, New Mexico. The military misadventure tantalized the mainstream press although the U.S. mission failed.¹⁶⁸ The *Blast* commented, "The jingo press, inspired by Big Business interests, is howling for intervention in Mexico."¹⁶⁹ The radical press helped deter the United States from invading Mexico.

The tenacious Magón brothers added to the anarchist press chorus upon leaving prison October 2, 1915. They once again resurrected *Regeneración*, as defiant as ever, in Los Angeles. It reached about twenty-five hundred subscribers. Every issue included a *cupón de protesta* for readers to send to Wilson, charging the post office—and particularly Los Angeles postal inspector W. M. Cookson—with conspiracy against their free press and free speech rights. Cookson recommended revoking *Regeneración's* second-class mail status because of statements such as this critique of the arrest of Mexican revolutionaries in Texas, "The ones who should be shot are the 'rangers' and the band of bandits who accompany them in their depredations."¹⁷⁰ The Mexican consul general asked the U.S. attorney general to prosecute, charging that *Regeneración's* intent was to incite Mexicans in the United States to take up arms against the United States.

On February 18, 1916, police raided the newspaper office. For the third time in seven years, Ricardo Flores Magón was jailed, this time along with Enrique, this time on charges of violating the Comstock laws' incitement clause. Police beat Enrique so badly he was hospitalized.¹⁷¹ The *Blast* and *Mother Earth* again proved loyal allies. Goldman published Enrique's essays and letters.¹⁷² *Mother Earth* rhetoric expressed the internationalism behind radical-press support for the Mexicans: "The cause of the wage-slave against his master has no frontiers."¹⁷³ They framed the latest Magón trial as a free press issue. "The

decision of that court will determine the future of the radical press of this country—your press,” Berkman wrote in the *Blast*.¹⁷⁴ He and Goldman set up defense funds. “Free press and free speech are labor’s first line of defense,” stated *Mother Earth*. “Will the workers see their press killed entirely?”¹⁷⁵

Conclusion

The question was prescient. Berkman and Goldman’s days as anarchist publishers were numbered. They and their journalistic colleagues could look back on a mixed legacy. “The anarchists, as I knew them,” recalled the ACLU’s Baldwin, “were always right and always ineffective.”¹⁷⁶ The anarchists’ vague outline of how anarchist society might function offered readers virtually no guidance on how to begin one. The movement’s antipathy to organization made it impossible to organize. In fact, its press was the most tangible product of the anarchist movement. Editors were much better at criticizing than creating civil society, leaving a void in leadership. Vitriolic rhetoric in their journals obscured most anarchists’ innate pacifism and made anarchists more enemies than allies. Prewar anarchist periodicals tended to preach to the choir, which—while affirming group identity, as intended by the nostalgic Haymarket memorials—likely failed to expand their appeal. The anarchists’ insularity was reflected in their periodicals’ inability to reach out to potential recruits. The fixation on Haymarket also indicates the U.S. anarchist movement’s inability to evolve in the twentieth century. Finally, the journals’ violent rhetoric also turned off many Americans and played into the hands of the hostile mainstream press and fed its hegemonic influence.

Anarchist print culture nonetheless provided voice for a small segment of disenchanted Americans who took literally the republican rhetoric of the American Revolution. Their social movement media sustained a community of like-minded individuals and an anarchist culture whose antiauthoritarian communalism continues to appeal to twenty-first-century dissidents alienated by global capitalism. The journals were the prime means to inform and educate adherents in the face of hegemonic demonization by the mainstream press. They also were the main repositories of anarchist culture. The steadfast way early anarchist editors championed the disempowered speaks to fundamental journalism ideals. Likewise, their courage in challenging oppressive institutions falls among the best traditions of advocacy journalism. Among the anarchist press’s most important contributions was its counter to mainstream media’s

reactionary framing of the labor movement and its supportive, transnational view of the Mexican Revolution. Another was the contribution of new ideas to public discourse about sexuality and marriage and serious questions about the role of church and state. Anarchist journalists' lonely, pioneering battles for a free press and free speech placed anarchists in the vanguard of twentieth-century protectors of civil liberties. The price they paid was dear, measured not in dollars but by years behind bars.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE INTELLECTUALS

WILSHIRE'S, THE MASSES, AND THE LYRICAL LEFT

The seriousness of strong convictions and the gaiety of great hopes ...

GRANVILLE HICKS, *John Reed: The Making of a Revolutionary*

■ One sunny Los Angeles afternoon in April 1901, so-called millionaire socialist Henry Gaylord Wilshire made a *Los Angeles Herald* reporter an offer he couldn't refuse. The well-built man clad in expensive English tweed and bearing an aristocratic name knew the journalist would appreciate a scoop—"For I am a newspaper man myself and know how it is." Wilshire grabbed his rakish Panama hat and invited the reporter to follow him to the Central Park pavilion, where the *Challenge* publisher intended to get himself arrested. "You may possibly make an interesting account of this and I shall not mind in the least."¹

City newspapers brimmed with accounts of a new city statute that forbade speaking in any public park without a permit. The law targeted radicals who, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, "made a practice of collecting every afternoon in Central Park and speechifying, until even the dogs of the neighborhood have become weary and disgusted." The city's Social Democratic Club, however, protested the law destroyed First Amendment rights of free speech and assembly. When Wilshire reached the pavilion, he mounted the stage, glanced around him, and announced: "I propose to test this ordinance and pulverize it into small bits about the size of primeval atoms.... A great principle is involved and I will see that the people get their rights. For further particulars, see the *Challenge* of next Monday."²

■ ■ ■

Flamboyant H. Gaylord Wilshire has been called the P. T. Barnum of radical

journalism—“one of the oddest characters in a movement where eccentricity was entirely normal.”³ Wilshire was the sole socialist publisher whose journal’s circulation numbers approached those of Julius Wayland. Wilshire was more than a clown, however, and the reasoned rationale and detailed plans he set forth for dealing with the industrial trusts demonstrated his theoretical abilities. “He was one of the very few Americans who developed anything like an original approach to socialism,” according to historian Howard Quint.⁴ Instead of calling for the dissolution of the trusts, Wilshire accepted them as a natural result of phenomenal economic growth. In his 1900 tract, *The Problem of the Trust*, Wilshire argued the nation’s industrial boom was temporary and trusts foreshadowed epidemic joblessness. Inevitably, the trusts would expand far beyond consumption, spawning massive unemployment and widespread social unrest. Americans would demand the federal government take over the trusts and establish an “industrial democracy” to replace the capitalist “industrial autocracy.”⁵ Armed revolution, according to Wilshire, would be unnecessary to usher in socialism.

This chapter will examine how literary socialist journals such as *Challenge* and its successor, *Wilshire’s*, functioned as community-builders among radical intellectuals largely outside the world of labor. Preeminent among them stood the *Masses*, crown jewel of the Lyrical Left journals that expressed their radicalism through literature and the arts. Others of note included the *Seven Arts*, *New Review*, and *Little Review*. These cultural radicals used experimental poetry, fiction, and visual arts instead of political and economic screeds to challenge industrial capitalism. Lyrical Left journals nurtured radical elites’ interests in personal revolution. Cultural radicals search “for a coherent worldview that will sanctify the human community, provide meaning and order in the universe, and maximize individual consciousness,” writes scholar Lois Palken Rudnick.⁶ Modern art held the key to personal revolution, they believed, and their periodicals sought to expand the radical agenda from a purely economic realm. The chapter concludes with a survey of a number of prewar popular magazines’ radical predilections, including *Cosmopolitan*, *McClure’s*, and *Everybody’s*, that distributed positive articles about socialism to a mass audience of middle-class Americans.

The Wealth, Wit, and Words of H. Gaylord Wilshire

Education was the paramount function of Wilshire’s journalism. The wealth and

wit that buoyed *Challenge* (1900–01) and *Wilshire's* (1901–15) set Wilshire's periodicals apart from radical journals more steeped in the realities of class struggle. Less didactic than *International Socialist Review* and more playful than *Mother Earth*, *Wilshire's* emphasized literature and produced a running intellectual commentary on the burning issues of the day. Quint labeled the monthly the “most interesting and certainly the most readable radical magazine of the Progressive period.”⁷ Wilshire's wealth made him rather unique among radical publishers. Born in Cincinnati on June 7, 1861, Wilshire was the son of a bank president with interests in Standard Oil, railroads, and gas companies. He tarried a year at Harvard University, then muddled along as manager of a small Ohio rolling mill for a few years before escaping west in 1884 to farm some of the orange groves beginning to perfume California valleys. He blamed big business for his flop as a mill manager, which set him on the intellectual path that led him to declare inevitable government takeover of the trusts.⁸ He landed well in the California land boom. With his brother, he accumulated a fortune as an Orange County real-estate developer and pioneer billboard mogul.

Wilshire helped found the *Weekly Nationalist*, a left-leaning newspaper espousing the movement inspired by Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, in Los Angeles in 1889. The next year, Wilshire, handsome and a gifted debater, became the first Socialist congressional candidate although technically running on the *Nationalist* ticket. He received a disappointing eleven hundred votes. Almost immediately after the election, he transplanted himself to London with his new wife, Hannah, previously married to anarchist William C. Owen, who had edited the *Nationalist*.⁹ The couple dallied in New York, where Wilshire plunged into a quixotic campaign for the attorney general's seat on the state Socialist Party ticket. Finally alighting in foggy London, he leapt into British socialist politics. A lasting influence of his British sojourn was his friendship with George Bernard Shaw. The dapper American conceded his conversational sparring partner no ground on socialism's finer points, but he began copying the way Shaw parted his hair in the middle and trimmed his Van Dyke beard to a fine point. He also adopted the views of Shaw's Fabian Socialist Society, a mild brand of socialism rooted in humanitarianism.¹⁰

Wilshire crisscrossed the English countryside speaking for socialism, even squeezing in a run for Parliament before returning to the United States in 1894. He stopped at an Illinois prison to encourage Eugene Debs, who was serving time for his role in the Pullman strikes, before returning to his California citrus and walnut groves. He compounded his fortune by spinning sun-kissed meadows into real-estate gold. Ironically, the posh avenue synonymous with the capitalist

fruits of consumerism bears the name of the socialist who first conceived of transforming a barley field into a 120-foot-wide thoroughfare linking downtown Los Angeles to the Santa Monica beach: Wilshire Boulevard.¹¹

Wilshire found time to tend his political career. Running a second time as a Socialist congressional candidate, he won nearly four thousand votes in 1900, about double the rest of Socialist ticket. Wilshire also marked the new century by launching *Challenge*. The weekly's motto repeated Wilshire's mantra: "Let the Nation Own the Trusts." The first number expressed the faith in the imminent rise of a new society shared by so many radical publishers: "We believe that society is approaching its critical point and that a transformation must ensue. That the present competitive system, embracing the private ownership of capital, is simply like the shell of an egg and is protecting the formation of a new and better society within itself. When this new society is ready to be born it will burst its shell and step forth, Minerva like, fully formed and completed."¹²

Wilshire wrote nearly every article in its sixteen tabloid-size pages (double its original eight), although articles by Ray Stannard Baker, John Brisben Walker, and other left-leaning reformers appeared.¹³ *Challenge* also featured clippings related to socialism from other periodicals, especially the *Clarion*, a British socialist journal. Wilshire's wry, sly commentaries on these clippings stamped his publications with his personality. He dissected a minister's column praising the selflessness of Christian Socialists, for example, in an adjacent column just as long.¹⁴ Wilshire could not resist tacking on responses to letters to the editor. One victim was Jacob Riis, the camera-toting social reformer whose *How the Other Half Lives* exposed the squalid state of Lower East Side slums. When Riis mailed Wilshire's a two-line postcard asking it to stop sending the journal, the publisher not only printed a copy of the postcard along with their correspondence but also published a photo of Riis above a wicked rejoinder.¹⁵ Wilshire always demanded the last word. Following his 1902 arrest in the park, he was miffed when the judge agreed the Los Angeles anti-speaking ordinance was unconstitutional. He was only half joking when he wrote the police chief, "Now, a new paper needs advertising to obtain a good circulation and any stick is good enough to beat a dog, you know. The cheapest and most convenient stick for me just now [is] this freespeech ordinance."¹⁶

Wilshire picked up another stick when he challenged—hounded is more accurate—failed Democratic presidential candidate Williams Jennings Bryan to debate him on socialism; in fact, that challenge was the source of the weekly's name. The famed orator pointedly ignored the \$10,000 Wilshire repeatedly dangled before him: \$5,000 simply for stepping onstage, another \$5,000 if the

audience declared Bryan the victor.¹⁷ The more proper *Clarion* characterized the offer as one of Wilshire's "steam-organ methods of advertising himself." Wilshire also courted attention by publishing praise heaped upon him by the famous and publicizing his social connections. As he explained, "Some jackasses might read my editorials all their lives and wind up thinking me a jackass myself. But let them hear that Earl Russell had me to dinner at his club, and then I am really quite the brainiest man they happen to know."¹⁸

Egotism undeniably was at play, as Wilshire also reprinted press accounts of his activities. Glowing press accounts of his lecture in Lincoln, Nebraska—which he visited to goad native son Bryan into debate—filled an entire page of the July 3, 1901, *Challenge*. A 1904 Wilshire's article on phrenology featured a photograph of the publisher with the analysis that his head "proclaims the thinker and philosopher."¹⁹ His hubris defined his Americanism. "To make a cult of egotism to secure publicity and then use publicity for the propagation of his cherished social doctrine is a kind of double-jointed philosophy that could originate nowhere but in the special conditions that govern social life in the United States," marveled a Canadian newspaper in a column that resurfaced in Wilshire's.²⁰ The author captured the contradiction inherent in many prominent radical publishers that impeded their effectiveness in building the strong sense of group identity that social movements need to flourish. Wilshire's agenda frequently focused more on him than on socialism.

Banished to Canada by the U.S. Post Office

Challenge grew so quickly that Wilshire moved to New York to joust with the Wall Street trusts. Unfortunately, the first number appeared five days after the 1901 assassination of President William McKinley, and jittery postal authorities denied Wilshire's application for second-class mail status. Astronomically higher first-class rates made distribution impossible. Wilshire rushed to Washington, where Third Assistant Postmaster General Edwin Madden claimed his journal was ineligible for reduced rates because it carried advertising—not only for his lectures but also for his ideas. Madden stretched interpretation of nineteenth-century postal regulations limiting second-class postal rates to non-commercial periodicals to ludicrous lengths to silence the nettlesome socialist journal.



H. Gaylord Wilshire moved operations to Toronto when the U.S. Postal Service refused to grant second-class mail status to his monthly socialist magazine. *Challenge*, October 12, 1901.

The popular press was disappointingly silent on what only a mere handful of journalists recognized as Madden's serious threat to a free press. William Randolph Hearst turned a deaf ear when Wilshire called on him at his office, as did editors of other New York dailies. "They frankly said they were not interested in the Post office blackmailing of the weekly and monthly press, as long as the daily press was left unmolested," Wilshire reported.²¹ Magazine publishers also were silent, even though, as Herbert Casson asked in *Wilshire's*, "If it is the policy of the Post Office Department to abolish personal journalism from the face of the earth, when will it censorize *Harper's*, *Pearson's*, *McClure's*, *Munsey's*, *Ainslee's*, *Gunton's*, *Leslie's*, *Bradstreet's*, *Dunn's Review*,

Lieber's Manual, McCall's, and George's Weekly?"²²

It remained for Wilshire to defend a free press, which he did with imagination and gusto. He replaced *Challenge* with the eponymous *Wilshire's Monthly Magazine* (eventually shortened to *Wilshire's*). When postal officials ignored his second-class application, his wealth enabled him to move to Toronto, where he could take advantage of a U.S.–Canadian treaty that obligated the U.S. Post Office to deliver the Canadian publication gratis, while Canada collected the postage fees. Wilshire relished the irony of fleeing to a monarchy to protect a free press. The January 1902 Canadian debut cover announced *Wilshire's* now was published “under the protection of the British Crown.” Thirty-three of its seventy-eight pages chronicled the post office battle. Its return envelopes proclaimed in red and black ink, “Banished to Canada / Suppressed by United States Post Office.” Madden's minions ate crow monthly for nearly the next three years, as *Wilshire's* missed no opportunity to lampoon the postal censors. A cartoon by Walter Crane, the famous English socialist and children's book illustrator, captured the situation by caricaturing the post office and the publisher as the proverbial spider and (bearded) fly.²³ The Canada exile also afforded Wilshire the opportunity to run for office in a third nation. His 1902 campaign for the Canadian Parliament promised a three-hour workday under the slogan “Let the people own the monopolies.”

New York's Republican senator Thomas “Boss” Platt was no fan of socialism but possessed a capitalist's appreciation of *Wilshire's* value to his state's economy. After he complained to the post office that it was depriving a constituent of the *Wilshire's* printing job, the magazine returned to New York in October 1904. The publisher, who had divorced in 1901, was accompanied by his second wife, Mary, a wealthy London widow. *Wilshire's* printing account was lucrative; he claimed a circulation above 270,000 in 1906, at the time some one-hundred-thousand higher than that of the *Appeal to Reason*.²⁴ The aesthetically pleasing magazine attracted a broad readership with well-edited literary and intellectual fare that avoided Marxist dogma. Much of its appeal can be credited to assistant editor A. Bert Bynon, who oversaw day-to-day operations during his boss's frequent travels. Joshua (sometimes Joseph) Wanhope, a future *Call* editor, signed on as a reporter and rose to assistant editor, and essayist Robert Rives La Monte also joined the staff. Wilshire introduced Upton Sinclair to radical readers in 1902 when he published his photograph in *Wilshire's* and recommended him as a young novelist worth reading. Wilshire and Sinclair became lifelong friends, with a shared interest in health fads.

Wilshire's friendships with English intellectuals made his magazine an

important conduit between British and American radicalism. The transnational roster of radical thinkers who contributed included George Bernard Shaw, Leo Tolstoy, Eugene Debs, Gustavus Myers, George Herron, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Algie Simons, William English Walling, Charles Edward Russell, Julian Hawthorne (grandson of Nathaniel), and Hungarian Odon Por. Editorial highlights included a March 1903 conversation on trusts between Wilshire and John D. Rockefeller Sr., Oscar Wilde's "The Soul of Man" in 1901, and the serialization of Jack London's "The Tramp" in 1904.

Illustrations also graced Wilshire's publications—many featuring the publisher. *Challenge* published a charming sketch of Wilshire as a jousting knight sent by Crane.²⁵ The publisher appeared as a lightning bug "enlightening the world" while evading an awkward-looking President Roosevelt in February 1902.²⁶ Other cartoons mocked Bryan.²⁷ The antitrust cartoons of syndicated *New York Journal* cartoonist Frederick Oppen, best known for his *Happy Hooligan* comic strip, appeared frequently. "He crowds into every cartoon such a powerful plea for public ownership of public utilities that the dumbest mind can grasp the idea at once," Wilshire declared. "The man who is too lazy to read an argument in favor of the only sane remedy for the Trust problem is unconsciously taught that argument by simply looking at Oppen's cartoons."²⁸ Oppen's illustrations also often were blatantly racist, a view Wilshire shared. In 1907, Merle Johnson began illustrating Wilshire's redesigned cover, now a full-page cartoon framed by Greek columns. Johnson sketched a raffish rhinoceros to replace the octopus that generally symbolized the trusts.²⁹ Wilshire also reprinted cartoons from such magazines as *Harper's Weekly* and the *North American Review*. One of the magazine's most enlightening features culled a half-dozen topical cartoons from mainstream newspapers to illustrate Wilshire's wry comments on current events.³⁰

Stimulating Socialist Consciousness through Art and Literature

Wilshire believed art and literature stimulated a socialist consciousness; conversely, contributor Leonard Abbott pointed out, socialism would free people to create beautiful daily surroundings to replace capitalism's "intolerably ugly" environment.³¹ His magazine thus invited artists into the radical community while expanding the literary horizons of readers already in the socialist fold. Poetry and short fiction bookended essays on socioeconomics, although Wilshire's shared the socialist fondness for third-rate bathos about labor.³²

Literary references abounded. Walt Whitman was “the greatest democrat who ever lived,” according to one contributor, while another bashed William Shakespeare as “a tool of aristocracy and royalty.”³³ A 1903 essay lauded Whitman and John Burroughs because they best “twined Nature, literature, and their own personalities.”³⁴ *Wilshire’s* came closest to anarchist *Mother Earth* in its emphasis on the arts and making the connection between beauty and a cooperative commonwealth. Publisher Wilshire’s anarchist bent also was apparent in his comment, “I want no one to govern me. I want liberty. I wish the government to concern itself with the administration of things, and to let each individual govern himself.”³⁵ He seemed unconcerned that this desire might conflict with his call for nationalizing industry.

Wilshire edified readers on the assembly line of labor-saving inventions that debuted in the early twentieth century because he believed technology integral to reducing the cost of production that figured heavily in his socialistic vision. Articles and photographs frequently described the latest inventions as benevolent forces for labor. The wireless, for example, would promote brotherhood.³⁶ Completion of the underwater trans-Atlantic wireless cable excited him because it facilitated the exchange of ideas.³⁷ Other articles spelled out the advantages of municipal utilities and supported trade unions.³⁸ Agriculture also figured prominently in the knowledgeable rancher’s magazine.³⁹ Wilshire also allotted abundant space to his own theory on the trusts.⁴⁰ Sometimes he debated critics such as Charles Kerr, who challenged Wilshire’s prophecy that socialism would triumph without strife.⁴¹ Much of Wilshire’s socialist agenda is reality today: besides his call for nationalization of railroads and municipal ownership of utilities and public transportation, his magazine argued for an eight-hour day, abolition of child labor, free public schools, public works projects, woman suffrage, social security, and unemployment insurance. Wilshire was a benevolent if erratic boss who, like Wayland, prided himself in limiting his thirty employees to a 41.5-hour workweek. He also hosted an annual staff picnic at his Long Island home.⁴²

Wilshire’s eclecticism alienated more sober American socialists. His friendship with Maxim Gorky, for example, precipitated a 1906 scandal when he invited the married Russian radical to New York, where he arrived with a woman not his wife. The mainstream press howled. The uptown Hotel Belleclaire, where Wilshire had installed the couple, kicked them out when guests complained.⁴³ Other notorious *Wilshire’s* visitors indicate the magazine’s radical clout, including Mother Jones, who dropped by the office upon her release from a Utah

prison in 1904, and William Haywood, who paid his respects several months after his acquittal in Idaho, to which the magazine devoted much coverage.⁴⁴ A telegram of support Wilshire sent in Gorky's name to Haywood during the trial, however, exacerbated negative mainstream press coverage of the trial and inclined moderate socialist leaders to dismiss the unorthodox publisher as a hindrance to the movement. Writer William Ghent claimed years later that party leaders shunned Wilshire as "a dangerous man to have around."⁴⁵ His comment underscores the elusive challenge of building a cohesive social movement among diverse radicals despite some shared ideals. The maverick *Wilshire's* would not be the journal that could link socialist synapses into a social movement.

The Decline of *Wilshire's* Magazine

The Haywood trial marked the beginning of *Wilshire's* gradual decline and the *Appeal to Reason's* meteoric ascent. The weekly *Appeal* held the advantage of timeliness—*Wilshire's* did not publish "gems" of Clarence Darrow's closing argument until September—but the Kansas journal's superior marketing and self-promotion seem the determining factors in its leaving *Wilshire's* in the dust.⁴⁶ By the time Haywood was acquitted in July 1907, *Appeal* circulation had topped 750,000, burying *Wilshire's* peak 270,000. Wilshire's finances had been unraveling ever since he made the expensive move from Canada back to New York the previous year. He never truly had deserved the "millionaire socialist" moniker; the magazine devoured great chunks of his fortune—and Mary's. His first New York office occupied the twenty-fifth floor of a Park Row skyscraper; in Toronto, he inhabited posh Queen's Hotel. Back in New York, he moved the magazine to the tony new Black Building at 200 William Street.⁴⁷ State-of-the-art equipment, such as Burroughs adding machines, filled the office, indicative of Wilshire's enthusiasm for labor-saving devices' role in the social revolution. The Wilshire family also lived and traveled in style. By the mid-1900s, however, to keep the magazine going, Wilshire had to sell his Los Angeles mansion and citrus ranch overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Although he claimed *Wilshire's* turned a profit, historian Quint says by 1906 Wilshire had spent much of his wife's fortune subsidizing his journal. He began borrowing money and issued *Wilshire's* stock with hopes of boosting circulation to a million.⁴⁸

Wilshire's subscription campaigns made Wayland's "Appeal Army" seem timid. Like the *Appeal's*, *Wilshire's* sales force received a 50 percent commission

on subscriptions, which generally cost readers a piddling fifty cents annually (in 1906, it briefly dropped to ten cents a year). Circulation prizes ballooned vastly out of proportion to the value of the subscriptions they brought in. Prizes in 1902 included a camera, a bicycle, and a collie. Eighth prize was a ten-acre fruit ranch. The 1,315 subscriptions that netted *Wilshire's* less than \$330 in 1904 earned cartoonist George Lockwood and his wife a Tonneau automobile valued at four times that amount, which enabled them to retire their horses and covered wagon from their crosscountry socialist lecture tours.⁴⁹ The 1909 subscription contest awarded the winner a trip around the world even as circulation plummeted.⁵⁰

Wilshire unapologetically sold advertising in *Wilshire's* on the theory that capitalism could finance the journal so readers could receive it practically free. Ads included such venerable middle-class products as Lea & Perrin's Worcestershire Sauce and Remington typewriters. Others specifically targeted socialists. "Ayer's Cherry Pectoral" in 1901 depicted a soapboxer with copy warning, "20 speeches in one day will cause twenty degrees of hoarseness even to the most hardened spellbinder." (Among Wilshire's money-making schemes was a socialist speaker's course.) He also attempted a book trade; offered the Socialist Library series, published by Charles H. Kerr; and sold recordings of socialist speeches.⁵¹ The magazine's most lucrative advertisements, however, touted suspect medicinal remedies. *Collier's Weekly* called Wilshire a charlatan.⁵²

Wilshire's most egregious ads plugged his gold mines in Bishop, California, and South America, in what was then British Guiana. They stand among the first "advertorials" that stealthily promote products in editorial packaging designed to appear as news copy. Wilshire sincerely believed in the mines' potential, but pages of his magazine solicited investors in decidedly uncomradely fashion. Victor Berger helped persuade the Socialist Party to officially denounce the gold mine venture, which he frequently attacked in the *Milwaukee Social-Democratic Herald*.⁵³ Berger's attacks inspired Wilshire's observation that socialists "stoop to the most petty and contemptible methods in their warfare on each other."⁵⁴ Wilshire's questionable entrepreneurialism likely informed Berger's reversal on his stance against a party press. The warring socialist publishers definitely testify to glaring gaps in socialist community.

ISR, at the other end of the socialist spectrum from Berger's daily, also warned readers against Wilshire's schemes after postal authorities in 1910 began investigating *Wilshire's* ad claims about the British Guiana operation.⁵⁵ The publisher, who had been visiting London with Mary and their young son, stayed

there. By the start of 1910, the magazine shrank to as few as sixteen pages and a nine-by-twelve-inch format. Its editorial mix boiled down to briefs, and Wilshire's defense of his gold mines dominated editorial space.⁵⁶ He settled comfortably into a rented Hampton estate. His remoteness from U.S. politics perhaps tempered his reaction to the 1911 McNamara brothers' trial, as his prescient advice that socialists not "lose their heads" trying to prove their innocence unleashed a "torrent of abuse" upon the expatriate publisher.⁵⁷ He immersed himself in British syndicalism, replacing his faith in the ballot with the direct action espoused by Tom Mann, the English syndicalist leader.⁵⁸ Wilshire and Sinclair briefly produced the *Syndicalist* when its editors were jailed in 1911–12.

British syndicalism consumed the slim shadow of *Wilshire's* that appeared sporadically until the Great War forced the financially strapped publisher back to Bishop in 1914. Wilshire's British exile also inclined him to support the war against Germany, a stance that further alienated him from the antiwar Socialist Party of America. *Wilshire's* final number, in February 1915, urged Americans to join England against the German autocracy. Wilshire sadly concluded, "The dream of a political Socialist party preventing international war has collapsed."⁵⁹ Perhaps the dream of a unified American Socialist movement also dissolved with his quirky magazine.

The Masses Ushers In Modernism with Satire

By the time *Wilshire's* had collapsed, the *Masses* (1911–17) had surpassed its influence among radical intellectuals. Of all prewar radical periodicals, the independent socialist satirical monthly published by a romantic clique of Greenwich Village intellectuals came closest to blending art and politics. Numerous historians have echoed John Patrick Diggins's appraisal that the wit and satirical art that leavened the *Masses's* socialist critique made it "perhaps the heartiest journal in the history of American radicalism."⁶⁰ The fabled periodical's influence far exceeded its peak forty thousand subscribers. Lyrical Left journals like the *Masses* helped usher in modernism, the twentieth-century sensibilities of a restless new generation eager to chuck Victorian stodginess and sentimentalism in its breathless quest for new ways to organize society, express themselves, and relate with fellow humans. Moderns embraced anything that contained the "simple but magical words 'new' and 'free,'" according to scholar Keith Richwine.⁶¹ Modernist challenges to every commonly accepted truth,

Mark Pittenger observes, informed the *Masses*'s "studied irreverence for the Marxist classics."⁶² Youthful editors Max Eastman and Floyd Dell and *Masses* contributors did not look back to dead nineteenth-century scientific socialists for guidance; these journalists helped create a radical culture that rejected all conventions and questioned all faiths.

Even the *Masses*'s clean, elegant layout and typography bespoke modernism. Originally a ponderous magazine on the consumer cooperative movement, its original benefactor was wealthy insurance executive Rufus Weeks, who helped write and edit the *Christian Socialist*. Weeks agreed to pay production costs for Dutch-born restaurateur-turned-publisher Piet Vlag until the *Masses* became self-sustaining. The first issue, printed in January 1911, was undistinguished, however, and the magazine floundered within a year. Weeks withdrew his support, but cartoonist Art Young saved the day.⁶³ He was among the *Masses*'s loyal yet unpaid artists who convened an emergency meeting in September 1912 to keep the magazine going. Young mentioned Eastman, an aspiring writer finishing a doctoral degree in philosophy at Columbia University. The group sent Eastman a note, "You are elected editor of the *Masses*, no pay."⁶⁴

The resurrected *Masses*, which debuted in December 1912, combined satire and art as had no other American radical periodical. "We are going to make *The Masses* a popular Socialist magazine—a magazine of pictures and lively writing," a note promised readers.⁶⁵ Predecessors included the eclectic *Comrade*, founded and edited by John Spargo and Algernon Lee, among others, dedicated solely to socialist art and literature from 1901 through 1905, when it merged into *ISR*.⁶⁶ Another was *Camera Work* (1902–07), the avant-garde art journal edited by Alfred Stieglitz, which disseminated the photographer's belief that art could heal divisions not only in the modern psyche but also across society. Stieglitz was a vocal fan of anarchist Peter Kropotkin and the Dadaists, who viewed their art as cultural radicalism.⁶⁷ A third precursor was the third incarnation of Wayland's *Coming Nation* (1910–13), which initiated some of the art and design attributed to the *Masses*. The latter's collective model was more ambitious, patterned after sophisticated European satirical magazines such as the German *Simplicissimus* and *Jugend*, which emphasized full-color cartoons over propaganda.

The *Masses*'s mélange of individualism and collectivism stood out for the sheer genius of its artists, its buoyancy and lack of dogma, sly satire, and modern sensibilities. "It stuck to no one particular creed," marveled IWW organizer Arturo Giovannitti, who contributed poems, "but tried to beat all isms into one: indeed it was Socialistic, Anarchistic, Syndicalistic, Feministic, optimistic and

pessimistic and all sorts and varieties of istics.”⁶⁸ Scholars a century later still trip over superlatives to describe the oversized monthly: “a buoyant, colorful, bohemian champion of socialism and the arts,” according to Leslie Fishbein. It “radiated sparkle and humor along with its biting criticism,” enthused literary historian Frederick Hoffman.⁶⁹ Granville Hicks added, “It had the seriousness of strong convictions and the gaiety of great hopes.”⁷⁰ Art historian Rebecca Zurier asserts its satirical stance positioned the *Masses* among the direct-action socialists in the wake of Haywood’s expulsion from the party. “Satire attacks,” she writes. “The propagandist hopes to persuade; the satirist attempts to subvert.”⁷¹

The *Masses* was a product of its environment, Greenwich Village, the heart of modern bohemia. “It was here that the radicalism of Marx and the anarchism of the I.W.W. met and mixed with the new experiments in literature and art,” according to literary scholar James Burkhart Gilbert. He observes that the intellectual socialism wafting across New York City in the 1900s drew from a broad tradition of humanitarian literature as well as the “revolutionary journalism” of realists and radicals, including London, Sinclair, Frank Norris, and Stephen Crane. *Masses* writers Dell and Reed celebrated the tramp-intellectual whom London embodied and who would feel right at home in the Village.⁷² Wobblies, socialists, anarchists, syndicalists, free lovers, artists, poets, playwrights, journalists, feminists, and other members of the twentieth century’s first American counterculture mingled in the Village’s cafés and coffee houses, inside the Liberal Club on Macdougall Street and Mabel Dodge’s lower 5th Avenue salon, and around Washington Square. “Everyone was cooking up some sort of revolution,” recalled the poet James Oppenheim, whose literary journal the *Seven Arts* spiced the stew.⁷³

Besides Young, *Masses* artists included Cornelia Barns, Maurice Becker, Stuart Davis, Elizabeth Grieg, Robert Minor, Boardman Robinson, John Sloan, and Alice Beach Winter. Writers besides Reed included Djuna Barnes, Louise Bryant, Randolph Bourne, Dodge, Vachel Lindsay, Carl Sandburg, Louis Untermeyer, Mary Heaton Vorse, Walling, and William Carlos Williams. Dell became the sole paid employee when he signed on as assistant editor for \$25 a week in 1913 after moving from the Chicago-based *Friday Literary Supplement* of the *Chicago Evening Post*, another purveyor of modernism. Reed began contributing stories during the Paterson silk workers strike in 1913. His *Masses* manifesto oozed modernist hubris: “The broad purpose of *The Masses* is a social one, to everlastingly attack old systems, old morals, old prejudices—the whole weight of outworn thought that dead men have saddled upon us; and to set up

many new ones in their places.... We intend to be arrogant, impertinent, in bad taste, but not vulgar. We will be bound by no one creed or theory of social reform, but will express them all, provided they be radical.”⁷⁴

Vorse recalled monthly editorial meetings of writers, artists, and a colorful cross-section of Villagers ensconced in tobacco smoke as they huddled around a big paper-strewn table at the 91 Greenwich Avenue office.⁷⁵ Dell read poems and articles aloud. His audience delighted in hooting down submissions deemed too sentimental or dogmatic or trite. “Nothing more horrible can be imagined than having one’s piece torn to bits,” Vorse recalled. “On the other hand, there was no greater reward than having them stop their groans and catcalls and give close attention; then laughter if the piece was funny, finally applause.”⁷⁶ The physical space and collective editing process bonded *Masses* contributors in a radical culture with a strong sense of group identity. The magazine delivered that sense of community to the many restless young men and women in the hinterlands who awaited its arrival in their mailboxes like a lifeline.

The *Masses* also offered a sense of identity to the Greenwich Village’s New Women, who represented the vanguard of feminism that extended beyond the call for the vote. Its bylines included names of the city’s leading New Women, whom Christine Stansell calls “icons of modernity.”⁷⁷ Its editors championed the New Woman’s credo of female sexual and professional fulfillment as requisite for women to thrive as autonomous human beings. Eastman, founder of the Men’s League for Woman Suffrage, marched in suffrage parades, and Dell’s 1913 *Women as World Builders* argued they had an important role to play in public life. Barns and Grieg wed satire with feminism in cartoons parodying anti-suffragists.⁷⁸ The *Masses*’s advocacy of birth control and free love will be discussed in [chapter 9](#).

Eastman proved a natural editor and adept fund-raiser. His ex-girlfriend Inez Milholland, the glamorous suffragist lawyer, arranged a dinner between Eastman and her suffrage pal, millionaire Alva Belmont. She donated \$2000 to the magazine. Milholland’s current beau, best-selling novelist John Fox Jr., threw in another thousand.⁷⁹ Over the next five years, other rich radicals emerged as guardian angels, although Dell later admitted, “Our getting money from the rich was sort of a skeleton in our proletarian revolutionary closet.”⁸⁰ The journal still needed to beseech readers to subscribe, and Eastman hit the lecture trail. A radical bookshop; a smattering of ads; and occasional fund-raising events, like its semi-annual costume bacchanals, also financed the *Masses*.⁸¹ The bookshop and bacchanals served as physical sites for participating in the counterculture promoted inside the magazine.

The magazine's iconoclasm, however, limited the journal's ability to forge a broad social movement group identity. "With its 'tone of perpetual dissent' and its refusal to support any one theory," argues Zurier, "*The Masses* was simply too individualistic, too uncompromising, too impertinent, and too ornery ever to rival the *Appeal to Reason* as a constructive tool for organizers." She adds, "As an organ of dissent, it achieved considerable influence."⁸² Its stable of clever artists, for example, made the *Masses* an especially effective counter to the hegemonic press. Young sketched a hilarious satire in 1913, titled *Freedom of the Press*, that portrayed a newsroom as a whorehouse overseen by "Madam Editor" and a clientele symbolizing "Big Advertising."⁸³

Although they positioned themselves as counter to the mainstream press, *Masses* editors never were under the illusion their audience was the proletariat. They first advertised the revamped magazine as "A Revolutionary Satirical Monthly for Everybody." They discussed their role among the radical press in a *Call* column that explained the *Masses* targeted "idealists" not directly involved in the class struggle. "Such people are especially numerous among artists and writers," it explained. "They need an organ of their own in which to make their own special gift to the Social Revolution—a gift of art and literature and humor which will reach the hearts and minds of some who are not accessible to straight propaganda, and will also furnish a satisfaction and relaxation to many who are themselves engaged in that kind of propaganda." Scientific socialism had its place, the piece acknowledged, but Eastman stated the *Masses* hoped to perform another small service by carrying "the truth in a pure form onto the parlor tables of a few of the Unmitigated Bourgeoisie."⁸⁴ The *Masses's* audience, in fact, comprised the so-called parlor socialists whom radicals on the labor front derided as well-off dilettantes who only talked about revolution.



Artist Art Young satirized the mainstream media as a house of prostitution. *Freedom of the Press, Masses 4* (December 1912).

Besides delving into revolutionary art, however, the *Masses* did provide a voice for labor and the poor. Reed did not report his 1913 Paterson jail stint from a parlor, and Sloan's iconic Ludlow cartoon of rage remains a journalistic classic. Other cartoons slammed violence against strikers at Calumet, Michigan, and hop-pickers trying to organize in Wheatland, California. *Masses* writers also immersed themselves in the new realism by churning out "slice of life" pieces about the downtrodden. In its own backyard, the magazine scored the city's failure to aid record numbers of unemployed during the frigid 1914 winter. The magazine adopted twenty-one-year-old IWW organizer Frank Tannenbaum, self-styled leader of the "Army of the Unemployed," whose story reads like that of a radical Cinderella. Tannenbaum's links with socialists, anarchists, and the IWW highlight the cross-currents of radicalism coursing through the city. The young Jewish immigrant from Austria hung around the *Mother Earth* office and took night classes at the anarchists' Ferrer Modern School when not working as a busboy or elevator operator.

News media coverage of Tannenbaum's campaign to house unemployed homeless men in city churches during winter 1914 offers a clear example of the difference between mainstream and radical press coverage. An estimated three hundred thousand New York men were jobless when on February 27 he began leading his army of hundreds to Manhattan churches. Instead of humbly requesting charity, they demanded shelter and food as their right. Several churches complied, but on March 4, a cleric at St. Alphonsus Catholic Church called police when Tannenbaum arrived. Police arrested him and nearly two

hundred followers sitting in the pews. He was charged with inciting a riot. The *Literary Digest* headline typified the hegemonic press perspective, “Churches Raided by the Jobless.”⁸⁵ In contrast, the anarchist and socialist press defended Tannenbaum.⁸⁶

The incident was a gift to the *Masses*, which revered Jesus Christ but skewered church hypocrisy. Sloan’s double-spread depicting a priest overseeing the men’s removal from his church by club-wielding police was elevated to sly satire by the sardonic title, *Calling the Christian Bluff*.⁸⁷ Other radical journals followed the *Masses*’s lead; *ISR*, for example, published Sinclair’s poem, “To Frank Tannenbaum in Prison.”⁸⁸ He was convicted of unlawful assembly, fined \$500, and served more than a year in Blackwell’s Island prison. Upon his release, Eastman published Tannenbaum’s first-person accounts of prison life, which prompted reforms, including dismissal of the warden.⁸⁹ His newfound fame won Tannenbaum a seat at Columbia University, where a wealthy reformer paid his tuition. He went on to write fifteen books about prison reform, education, labor, and slavery, culminating in path-breaking work on the Mexican Revolution.⁹⁰

Revolutionary Visual Rhetoric about Everyday Life

Its visual rhetoric made the *Masses* unique and memorable. By 1912, *Masses* contributors Minor, Robinson, Sloan, and Young formed the nucleus of what *Current Literature* called a “renaissance of the art of the cartoonist.”⁹¹ All were commercial successes who donated their work to radical periodicals. Some of the *Masses*’s most memorable images depicted everyday life on the Lower East Side. Sloan pioneered the genre, which was revolutionary because it deemed its humble topic deserving of artistic attention. His *The Return from Toil*, for example, celebrate what appear to be prostitutes en route home from work.⁹² The realism nurtured in the *Masses* grew into a major genre of American painting, referred to as the Ashcan School, originally a derogatory term but soon embraced by its artists. Dell once described Sloan’s illustrations as “a strange and inevitable beauty, half compounded of ugliness, a disorder surprised and yet studied calmly, until it reveals some deep-lying trait of human nature.”⁹³ The editorial collective added a title that transformed Stuart Davis’s caricature of two homely working-class women into visual rhetoric that satirized popular magazines’ bland assembly line of pretty cover girls: *Gee, Mag, Think of Us*

*Bein' on a Magazine Cover!*⁹⁴ The *Masses*'s counter to hegemonic versions about which people mattered was as subversive as it was amusing.

After the 1914 First Amendment case stemming from the Associated Press's libel suit over Young's cartoon about the West Virginia coal wars, the *Masses* figured in another free-press fight. Officials banned it from subway newsstands in 1916 when authorities deemed indecent a poem by William Carlos Williams that debunked the Immaculate Conception.⁹⁵ *Masses* fan Helen Keller expressed the sentiments of many when she protested, "Newsstands must be impartial if freedom of the press is to mean anything."⁹⁶ The subway ban stood, despite the sixty-seven editors, fourteen artists, and twenty-seven "suffragettes, socialettes, anarquettes and uncontrollable birth-controllers" that showed up to support the *Masses* at the subway hearing.⁹⁷ The assortment indicates how the *Masses* brought together a diverse community of radicals. Less successful at maintaining community among its editorial collective, the *Masses* suffered another blow in 1916 when Sloan led an artists' revolt against Eastman. Sloan disliked the increasingly propagandistic tone the magazine adopted as war crept closer. He particularly resented the politicized captions Eastman slapped on his illustrations, which, as an artist, he believed should speak for themselves. Seven contributors resigned. Robinson, Minor, and Young remained.⁹⁸ The fusion of art and politics became undone. The *Masses*'s tone turned more serious and strident as war approached. Censors lurked.

The Seven Arts and Other Lyrical Left Journals

The *Seven Arts* was another Lyrical Left gem that dazzled during its brief life, from November 1916 through October 1917. It possessed a radical consciousness even though it avoided articles that dealt strictly with politics or economics. Backed by yet another rich radical, founders Waldo Frank and James Oppenheim encouraged artistic expression of a spiritual revolution against American materialism and emotional sterility. "We aspire," Oppenheim declared, "to be alive in every part of ourselves."⁹⁹ Industrial capitalism encompassed all they believed wrong with American society. Along with associate editor Van Wyck Brooks, the socialist trio placed before the public eye countercultural works by unknown artists including John Dos Passos, D. H. Lawrence, Amy Lowell, Robert Frost, Kahlil Gibran, Eugene O'Neill, and Sherwood Anderson. Popular novelist Theodore Dreiser contributed a piece whose title, "Life, Art and America," captured the breadth of the magazine's ambitions.¹⁰⁰ Gilbert argues it

was through the pages of the *Seven Arts* and the *Masses* rather than through the IWW or Socialist Party that cultural radicals made their lasting mark. He writes of the *Seven Arts*, “It did not attempt to inject politics into literature, but aimed at broadening the writer’s awareness of all aspects of life, including the political.”¹⁰¹ The fame today of the unknown authors it championed a century ago speaks to the *Seven Arts*’ impact on American culture.

The addition to the staff of Randolph Bourne, a brilliant essayist lured from the elite progressive magazine *New Republic*, added more intellectual luster to the *Seven Arts*.¹⁰² Bourne spurned puritanism and celebrated multicultural America’s potential to foster an artistically vibrant, international alternative to the traditional nation-state. This pioneer of cultural pluralism coined the term “transnational,” (he spelled it transnationalism) in *Atlantic Monthly* in 1916.¹⁰³ In a series of searing condemnations of war beginning in June 1917, Bourne brought a note of gravity to the *Seven Arts*. “The War and the Intellectuals” pilloried American enthusiasm for foreign adventure in contrast to its indifference toward domestic labor strife:

Numbers of intelligent people who had never been stirred by the horrors of capitalistic peace at home were shaken out of their slumber by the horrors of war in Belgium. Never having felt responsibility for labor wars and oppressed masses and excluded races at home, they had a large fund of idle emotional capital to invest in the oppressed nationalities and ravaged villages of Europe. Hearts that had felt only ugly contempt for democratic strivings at home beat in tune with the struggle for freedom abroad.... The task of making our own country detailedly fit for peace was abandoned in favor of a feverish concern for the management of the war, advice to the fighting governments on all matters, military, social, and political, and a gradual working up of the conviction that we were ordained as a nation to lead all erring brothers towards the light of liberty and democracy.¹⁰⁴

Oppenheim’s barrage of antiwar editorials and Reed’s scorching contributions compounded the effect. The threat of prison for such unpatriotic utterances was real. “It was something in those days to know one was shadowed, spied upon, trailed by snoopers, that one must whisper what one thought in a restaurant and even then be sure one’s friend wasn’t going to hand one over to the police,” Oppenheim recalled. “The lying propaganda had something foul and degrading in it. The exultation of the timorous stay-at-homes was rotten and debased. ‘*Enemies Within*,’ shrieked the old New York *Tribune* and spat snake’s

venom at Bourne and the rest of us.” The magazine’s wealthy backer issued an ultimatum: no more antiwar screeds, or no more subsidies. The *Seven Arts* disappeared. Oppenheim concluded, “But I wouldn’t have missed that year for kingdom come.”¹⁰⁵

The *New Review* was another smart member of the Lyrical Left based in New York. The cartoon-free, poetry-friendly, intellectually rigorous weekly that debuted January 4, 1913, likewise palpitated with insights on suffrage, race, nationalism, war, art, and New Paganism amid other current issues by contributors including Walter Lippmann, Louis Fraina, Mary White Ovington, Elsie Clews Parson, and W. E. B. Du Bois. *Masses* contributor La Monte heralded Eastman as a leader of “The New Intellectuals” in the January 1914 issue, and Eastman and Dell joined the *New Review* editorial board four months later.¹⁰⁶ The *Masses* subsumed the struggling *New Review* in 1916 as a twenty-page supplement of theater and book reviews and cultural commentary. But the *Masses Review* proved so expensive the magazine soon shed it.¹⁰⁷

The *Little Review* (1914–29) at first glance seems to have little in common with radical journals bearing titles such as the *Blast* or *National Rip-Saw*. The avant-garde literary magazine, however, pushed the economic and political radicals’ social revolution into the literary world. Publisher Margaret Anderson’s sensibilities embodied the moderns’ passion for newness that was part of the radicals’ broad vision for a new social order. Stansell declares the iconoclastic fiction, poetry, essays, and criticism that filled the *Little Review* the best modern writing in prewar America. In its early years, the monthly championed imagism, cubism, and anarchism, among otherisms. Anderson became enamored of anarchism when she heard Emma Goldman speak in Chicago. The pair became good friends, and Goldman introduced Anderson to the anarchists’ expansive view of freedom and the role of art in revolution. As elegant and lithe as Goldman was dumpy, Anderson was as solid a rebel. She broke with her wealthy family and defied the cultural taboo against homosexuality by living openly with her partner, artist Jane Heap. Anderson wrote that art and anarchism were complementary parts of the all-encompassing social revolution.¹⁰⁸

The *Little Review* also championed the IWW. Following the 1915 execution of IWW troubadour Joe Hill, Anderson asked, “For God’s sake, why doesn’t someone start a revolution?”¹⁰⁹ Chicago detectives who then raided her office found nothing incriminating in Anderson’s first but not last brush with the law. Soon after, she moved briefly to San Francisco before boomeranging to Greenwich Village, where the *Little Review* hit its stride. London-based poet Ezra Pound signed on as foreign editor in April 1917, submitting his own poems

and soliciting experimental symbolist works by T. S. Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, and James Joyce. Early work by William Carlos Williams, Djuna Barnes, Aldous Huxley, Jean Cocteau, and Ben Hecht graced its pages. Meanwhile, Anderson and Heap, who lived in a tent alongside Lake Michigan for six months in 1915 rather than cut back on the sixty-page *Review*, cut their own hair, made their own clothes, and did their own cooking and cleaning to make ends meet. Her self-imposed poverty did not stop Anderson from taking the Post Office to court after it refused to mail the October 1917 *Little Review*. Inspectors deemed obscene Lewis's short story "Candleman's Spring Mate." Judge Augustus Hand ruled against her, but the incident steeled Anderson for the extended freespree battle that commenced in March 1918 with the *Little Review's* publication of the first of twenty-three installments of James Joyce's baffling modernist novel, *Ulysses*.¹¹⁰

One more New York intellectual periodical is notable more for the sheen of its leftist luminary affiliates than for its literary impact. The *Intercollegiate Socialist* (1913–21) was the bimonthly magazine of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society (ISS), an important link between radicals in the 1910s and those in the 1960s. The society was the first lasting, avowedly ideological, political student organization in the nation, according to historian Max Horn. Sinclair founded the society in 1905, and London served as its first president. Gilman and Darrow were among intellectuals who supported its mission to establish socialist study clubs on college campuses. By 1915, the society numbered thirteen hundred members, neither all socialists nor all students, on seventy college campuses. Besides linking its widely dispersed members in a community that transcended geography, the journal functioned as the main conduit for information about ISS events and literature on the socialist movement. Student chapter leaders and members included Bourne, Freda Kirchwey (*Nation* editor), Bruce Bliven (*New Republic* editor), and Lippmann, the Harvard chapter president. The society became the League for Industrial Democracy in 1921 and promulgated socialism in its magazine *Labor Age*. In the 1960s, the Students for a Democratic Society emerged largely from the league's student branch.¹¹¹

Popular Magazines Envision a New Social Order

Radical ideas also got a hearing in some prewar popular magazines. Their attention mattered, because in the years before radio, movie theaters, and television, magazines were the nation's main mass purveyor of culture and

entertainment. Matthew Schneirov calls popular magazines the “first dominant discursive medium of mass culture.” Magazine circulation snowballed to 65 million by 1900, thanks to increased literacy, technological advances, railroads, national advertising, and reduced postal rates. Current events and politics dominated their pages, which differed from radical monthlies partly because their lucrative advertising made them the major transmitters of the consumer culture that radicals detested. Amid the swirling milieu of modernism, however, the most liberal journals entertained a vision of a new social order free from poverty and class conflict. Schneirov describes these magazines as sites of struggle for cultural hegemony about the emerging new society of corporate capitalism.¹¹² *Wilshire*’s exaggeratedly claimed in 1906, “The great magazines are now accepting the proposition of the Cooperative Commonwealth as a matter of course.”¹¹³ Algie Simons in 1907 stated, “Magazine after magazine has found itself unable to exist unless it fell into line with some form of radicalism, while every new periodical publication has sought to out-radical its previous competitors.”¹¹⁴ Both mistook the magazines’ curiosity as a commitment to overthrow the capitalist system in which they flourished.

The scrappiest popular magazine was Samuel S. McClure’s eponymous muckraking journal, which the self-taught editor extraordinaire founded in 1893. It served as a powerful voice for labor and other underdogs in the rising corporate state. *McClure*’s vivid exposés of corruption and graft contained an inherent critique of capitalism, or at least its excesses. In 1894, it published Hamlin Garland’s illicit account of appalling conditions at Homestead. The realist novelist and an illustrator sneaked under a fence onto the steel works and interviewed workers only too happy to describe their brutalizing routine.¹¹⁵ Ida Tarbell’s nineteen-part exposé in *McClure*’s of the Rockefeller oil monopoly remains the muckraking genre’s penultimate specimen.¹¹⁶ *McClure*’s also published socialist supporter Lincoln Steffens’s series on municipal corruption, “The Shame of the Cities,” and Ray Stannard Baker’s investigation of railroad trust malfeasance.¹¹⁷ The muckrakers possessed a little more faith—but not much—in the legal system to reform society than did the radicals.¹¹⁸ They also possessed a respect for facts and the craft of verification that lifted them considerably above the radical journals’ best-known investigative reporters, the dissembling George Shoaf and self-aggrandizing John Kenneth Turner. Tarbell, Steffens, and other muckrakers more closely adhered to the information model that was beginning to subsume fin de siècle yellow journalism. Sam McClure embodied the major distinction between radical and popular magazine publishers, because he defined himself as a journalist, while his socialist peers

defined themselves as activists for whom journalism was only a tool.

Metropolitan Magazine also embraced radical sensibilities. It had an “editorial policy of a very Socialistic tendency,” according to Wilshire.¹¹⁹ Its Fabian English editor routinely assigned stories sympathetic to socialism. Former *Call* editor Algernon Lee was on staff, as was Ghent. William Mailly was an assistant editor until he left to start the *Call* in 1908. Reed was on assignment for *Metropolitan* during the four months he galloped across Mexico with Pancho Villa. Reed also sent articles to the *Masses*, but *Metropolitan* footed the bill.¹²⁰ In 1903, Ghent created a forum to stimulate the exchange of socialist ideas, casually called the “X” club, which comprised a singular group of intellectual men curious about socialism who gathered frequently at midtown restaurants for dinner and debate. X club membership was a veritable who’s who of reform journalists, including *Call* editor Lee; muckrakers Steffens and Charles Edward Russell; Norman Hapgood, editor of *Collier’s Weekly*; Hamilton Holt, managing editor of *Independent* magazine; Abbott, editor of *Current Literature*; and Walker, *Cosmopolitan* publisher and editor. Morris Hillquit, John Dewey, Charles Beard, Walling, and J. G. Phelps Stokes also belonged.¹²¹

Under Walker, *Cosmopolitan* frequently targeted capitalism and class. The well-traveled military cadet, newspaper editor, and unsuccessful congressional candidate called for nationalization of the railroads and telegraph and public ownership of the trusts. He departed from the radicals, however, in his belief that regulation of capitalism could create an equitable new society. The magazine veered farther left after Hearst bought it in 1905, even as its addition to the Hearst stable made it part of a powerful new trust, the news media industry. Hearst assigned David Graham Phillips, another socialist sympathizer, to pen a muckraking 1906 exposé, “The Treason of the Senate,” an explosive indictment of politicians bought off by capitalists. In *Cosmopolitan*, Robert Hunter, an *ISR* columnist and *Call* contributor, exposed dangerous conditions threatening women workers.¹²² London and Sinclair described their conversions to socialism in a series called “What Life Means to Me.”¹²³ Future Socialist Russell investigated “The Growth of Caste in America.” Hillquit received premium space in which to champion socialism in an installment of the magazine’s editorial roundtable.¹²⁴ Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to label *Cosmopolitan* a socialist magazine. “There was no consistent ideology or presentation of an alternative,” Schneirov concludes, “and no one would confuse this magazine with *Appeal to Reason*.”¹²⁵

Socialist publisher Kerr would have agreed. *ISR* argued the open-minded popular magazines diverted desperately needed revenue from starving socialist

social movement media. A 1913 *ISR* article admonished readers never to buy “semisocialist” journals. “Such magazines and papers have come into our movement,” it warned. “They seek the support of the working class by alluring cover designs and pictures; they pretend to advocate Socialism but constantly teach the workers to be content with reform and reform measures.”¹²⁶ Kerr feared the popular magazines were winning the cultural hegemonic battle to ordain corporate capitalism as the optimal social system. Ultimately, the most lasting lesson that advertising-driven popular magazines taught their middle-class audience may have been to measure happiness by the objects they owned. Middle-class readers nonetheless felt a tension between their desire to emulate the wealthy and a social conscience that sought to remedy poverty. Popular magazines catered to both inclinations, a contradiction that circumscribed their capitalist critique. They did, however, present the socialist vision of a cooperative commonwealth to a mass audience. As site of the major confluence between the radical and mainstream press in terms of content and contributors, the popular liberal magazines refute the notion that these media were completely dichotomized. They are evidence that counter-hegemonic discourse has been a constant stream in the flow of American journalism.

Conclusion

Lyrical Left journals comprised an influential segment of counter-hegemonic discourse. They expanded the radical agenda from a purely economic realm to one that encompassed the arts and literature. The *Masses* and *Wilshire*’s broadened the range of the radical community and the contents of radical social movement media. Educating readers about the breadth of human possibility was their main function. While the revolutionary political and economic agendas of narrower socialist periodicals never came to pass, the revolutionary cultural sensibilities nourished by the Lyrical Left indelibly stamped their modernist imprint on the twentieth century. At some level, their cultural iconoclasm and enthusiasm for the new and unknown succeeded in at least temporarily transcending their followers many “-isms” and uniting them in a loose community dedicated to reenvisioning what it means to be human. The optimism that Lyrical Left journals expressed for human possibility and social change remains a cultural artifact of innocence that would disappear during World War I.

CHAPTER EIGHT

“THE BLACK MAN’S BURDEN”

RACE AND THE RADICAL PRESS

“If you are saving dying babies, whose babies are you going to let die?”

W. E. B. DU BOIS, “Socialism and the Negro Problem”

■ Soon after moving north from Atlanta in 1910 to edit the *Crisis*, the monthly magazine of the newly created National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, W. E. B. Du Bois joined Socialist Party Club Number 1 of New York City. The sociologist had been moving cautiously toward socialism for more than a decade. He grew up in a Berkshire Mountains village with all odds stacked against him as a mixed-race child of a poor, single African American mother. A keen intelligence and Yankee drive to excel helped him become in 1895 the first African American to earn a Harvard University doctoral degree. While studying from 1892 to 1894 at the University of Berlin, he attended meetings of the German Social Democratic Party.¹ The thoroughly bourgeois young scholar, however, believed too many German socialists were part of the “anarchistic, semi-criminal proletariat.”² A decade of researching pervasive racism back in the United States would pass before Du Bois voted for Eugene Debs in 1904.

The newly minted professor’s groundbreaking 1899 study, *The Philadelphia Negro*—the first of ninety-four works he produced in his ninety-five years—enveloped modern surveys in historical context but lacked a sophisticated class analysis. During a dozen years as an Atlanta University professor, Du Bois’s views on racism changed dramatically as he delved into the Deep South’s oppressive social conditions. His observations led him to a class analysis that connected racism to capitalism. That analysis grew more critical as he moved from advocating black capitalism as the solution to racial inequality to condemning capitalism as the source of all human oppression. He steeped

himself in American socialist works such as Robert Hunter's *Poverty*, Jack London's *People of the Abyss*, and Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* before declaring himself a "socialist of the path." He called for nationalization of the railroads and many industries. In 1907, as editor of the new magazine, *Horizon: A Journal of the Color Line*, he encouraged African American readers to leave the Republican Party of Abraham Lincoln for the Socialist Party Debs. Socialism, Du Bois asserted in *Horizon*, was "the one great hope of the Negro American."³ His 1911 novel *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* outlined a broad socialist vision centered on an alternative cooperative economic model based on southern black culture as a solution to American class, race, and gender inequity.⁴ Less than two years after joining the Socialist Party, however, he resigned from Local No. 1, in part because he wanted to endorse Woodrow Wilson for president, but Du Bois also had tired of the Socialists' failure to incorporate blacks and its silence on labor racism. "The Negro problem," Du Bois declared in the socialist *New Review*, on whose editorial board he sat, "is the great test of the American Socialist."⁵

■ ■ ■

No aspect of the fractious radical movement was more contradictory than the radicals' attitudes toward "the Negro problem," the question of how to incorporate into American society 10 million African Americans who even most sympathetic whites believed incapable of full citizenship. This chapter will detail how radical press contents dramatically demonstrate the ambivalence and confusion endemic in the topic of race among radicals in the early 1900s. Eugene Debs offered heartfelt paeans to workers of all colors in the *Appeal to Reason* while publisher Julius Wayland supported segregation. The Industrial Workers of the World united black and white lumber workers in Louisiana, but *Industrial Worker* published cartoons that depicted black men as buffoons. The *Masses* lashed lynching while *Wilshire's* published racist rants. One contributor told *International Socialist Review* readers in 1903, "As a race the negro worker of the South lacks the brain and the backbone necessary to make a Socialist," while the next year the journal declared, "The historic mission of the working class is to destroy in its supremacy all classes, and to blend humanity into one homogeneous, fraternal whole."⁶ The incoherence regarding race was the inevitable result of the fact that the radicals' worker remained a white, male construct. The casual confidence in white supremacy exuded by radical journals supposedly committed to egalitarianism also reflected the insidiousness of American racism. Marxian economic determinism as the root of all evil further

blinded radicals by reducing racism to merely a symptom of class.

The term “Progressive Era” seemed a cruel taunt to African Americans as Reconstruction gave way to legal and extralegal racial oppression. The U.S. Supreme Court sanctioned segregation in *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896, and blacks comprised most of more than sixteen hundred lynching victims from 1900 through 1918 counted in a NAACP study.⁷ Some frustrated blacks answered white radicals’ ambivalent invitation to join them in the class war. On the cusp of World War I, a black socialist periodical even appeared. Of course, no idea was more radical in the twentieth century than equal rights for African Americans, who had employed journalism to advance their cause since 1827, when free black Samuel Cornish founded *Freedom’s Journal* in New York. In the 1890s, African American journalist Ida Wells-Barnett used muckraking techniques to contest the legitimacy of the *New York Times*’s disturbingly “objective” reports on southern lynchings with her investigations into what she rightly termed white terrorism.⁸ The black press expanded by 1916 to some 450 periodicals, whose calls for voting rights, outrage against lynching, and campaigns against job discrimination filled the void in mainstream media. While its demand for racial equality was radical, save for few exceptions the black press did not contest American capitalism.

The Radicalism of the *Crisis* and Other Black Periodicals

Scholar Richard Digby-Junger argues the *Crisis* is one of four black periodicals that should be considered part of the early radical press. The others are William Monroe Trotter’s *Guardian* (1901–13), Marcus Garvey’s *Negro World* (1918–33), and the *Messenger* magazine (1918–128).⁹ The *Crisis* endorsed 1916 Socialist presidential candidate Allan Benson, for example, and in 1917 it published a radical “oath” for black voters, envisioning a cooperative commonwealth: “I will make the second object of my voting the division of the Social Income on the principle that he who does not work, be he rich or poor, may not eat; and that Land and Capital ought to belong to the Many and not to the Few.”¹⁰ The *Crisis* purveyed radical critiques of American capitalism through the prism of a distinctly black cooperative commonwealth.

“If we American Negroes are keen and intelligent we can evolve a new and efficient industrial cooperation quicker than any other group of people,” Du Bois wrote in 1917, “for the simple reason that our inequalities of wealth are small, our group loyalty is growing stronger and stronger, and the necessity for a

change in our industrial life is becoming imperative.”¹¹ Founders of the *Crisis*’s publisher, the interracial NAACP, included socialists William English Walling, Mary White Ovington, and Charles Edward Russell. Socialist Mary Dunlop Maclean, a former *Times* feature reporter, signed on as managing editor in 1911, which enhanced the magazine’s socialist outlook. Du Bois’s prewar positioning of race at the nexus of socioeconomic analysis placed him nearly a century ahead of scholars who addressed the issue toward the end of the twentieth century. Late in life, he parsed global oppression in a word: “Empire.” “The domination of white Europe over black Africa and yellow Asia, through political power built on the economic control of labor, income and ideas,” he explained. “The echo of this industrial imperialism in America was the expulsion of black men from American democracy, their subjection to caste control and wage slavery.”¹² Du Bois made important contributions to radical discourse through his critiques of the lackluster Socialist record on race and trade unions’ exclusion of blacks.¹³

Trotter’s *Guardian* is notable among Digby-Junger’s journalistic quartet for breaking with Tuskegee Institute founder Booker T. Washington’s accommodating approach toward racism, a critical step toward formation of the twentieth-century civil rights movement. Garvey’s *Negro World* exerted most of its influence beginning in the early 1920s, when it sold more than two hundred thousand copies weekly. Garvey was a master printer in Jamaica who brought his Universal Negro Improvement Association to the United States in 1916. He called for black Americans to return to Africa to create a new society. *Negro World* and the *Messenger* were part of a vibrant black press revival that followed Washington’s death in 1915, grew more assertive during World War I and, according to historian Theodore Kornweibel Jr., flowered in the 1920s into the “New Negro Journalism.”¹⁴ Their editors and readers were “New Crowd Negroes” whose postwar demands for racial equality branded them militant. Digby-Junger judges *Negro World* “the most consistently radical Black newspaper in early-20th-century America” and likens Garvey to socialist-editor predecessors: “Like German-American radical journalist Daniel De Leon, Garvey was a fanatic, an ideologue, and a teacher who used his newspaper not just to communicate ideas but to transform readers into adherents. His contention that Black nationalism was the only salvation against race genocide was as serious an ideological weapon as the 1886 Haymarket bomb. Like J. A. Wayland, Garvey also knew how to promote his publications, how to make them appeal to a mass readership.”¹⁵

The *Messenger*'s Call for Social Revolution

Yet only the socialist *Messenger* called for revolution against the United States' basic political and economic organization; it billed itself as "the only magazine of scientific radicalism in the world published by Negroes."¹⁶ The appearance of what Kornweibel terms the "self-consciously ultra-militant" *Messenger* in November 1917 inaugurated the New Negro Journalism.¹⁷ The magazine had originated eight months earlier as the *Hotel Messenger*, official journal of the Headwaiters and Sidewaiters Society of Greater New York. It became independent by the fall, when its pair of young, college-educated African Americans editors endorsed the Socialist city ticket.¹⁸ Despite Chandler Owen's name on its masthead, copublisher A. Philip Randolph "was its soul and driving force," according to Digby-Junger.¹⁹ Both belonged to the New York Socialist Party, soapboxing from Harlem to Wall Street and opening a party branch in Harlem.²⁰ The *Messenger*'s second issue pronounced Du Bois and other Negro leaders old-fashioned "mental manikins and intellectual Lilliputians" too old to be reformed. The hope of race rested with new, more radical leaders, Owen concluded.²¹ The *Messenger* was a moderate socialist journal that supported political action, however, and by the 1920s embraced black capitalist enterprise. But in its early years during World War I, the *Messenger* supported bolshevism, direct action, and the IWW. Randolph penned at least one editorial blaming capitalism for lynching.²² The *Messenger* also campaigned for the release of Ben Fletcher, the only African American defendant in the mass IWW sedition trials in 1918, who was sentenced to ten years in prison.²³

The *Call* called the *Messenger* one of the nation's "most valuable and unique Socialist publications."²⁴ It noted the editors' grasp of African Americans' economic status, "complicated, as it is, by racial antagonism," an editorial comment that veered from the *Call*'s usual insistence that the "Negro problem" would magically disappear when the cooperative commonwealth replaced capitalism. White socialists' denial of race as a serious obstacle to universal brotherhood—and their blindness to their own deeply inscribed racism—goes a long way toward explaining the indifference of America's most oppressed class toward socialism.²⁵

The Socialist Party's Stance on Race

The Socialist Party of America's first official radical act in the white supremacist United States had been to welcome African Americans. One of its founding resolutions in 1901 invited blacks to join Socialists and promised them "equal liberty and opportunity." Debs endorsed the resolution as "a vital part of the national platform." The following year, the party forbade segregated locals. Socialism enlightened the racial views of many of its converts. "I had been indoctrinated with the notion that the whites were superior to the blacks; it was not long after I had studied the principles of Socialism that my attitude toward Negroes was reversed," recalled native Texan George Shoaf. "When I became a full-fledged Socialist, every vestige of race prejudice was driven from my system."²⁶ Radical journalists certainly considered themselves unstained by race prejudice and uniformly condemned overtly cruel acts of racism. The *Call*, for example, published anthropologist Franz Boas's paper arguing that no scientific evidence found Negroes biologically inferior to whites.²⁷

No subject spilled more outraged ink than the terroristic wave of lynching largely condoned or ignored by the mainstream press. An appalled *Call* quoted the *Anderson (South Carolina) Intelligencer's* editor's jocular firstperson account: "The lynching took place at midnight and two hours later the big press was grinding out papers telling of the happy event."²⁸ Linking lynching to socioeconomics made it a natural target for anticapitalists. Wherever large numbers of blacks began to demand economic rights, the IWW's *IW* stated, stories circulated that some negro "considered dangerous to the material interests of the industrial masters" had attempted to rape a white woman. When "sufficiently terrorized," it observed, the blacks returned to work.²⁹ The *Masses* printed this deadpan brief under the mordant headline, "Southern Humor": "A seventeen-year-old Negro girl was raped by drunken whites, who entered her home and found her alone. Her screams brought her brother from the barn. He kicked in the door, fought the two whites, killed one of them, and fled. The aroused white community, being unable to find him, then lynched the girl."³⁰

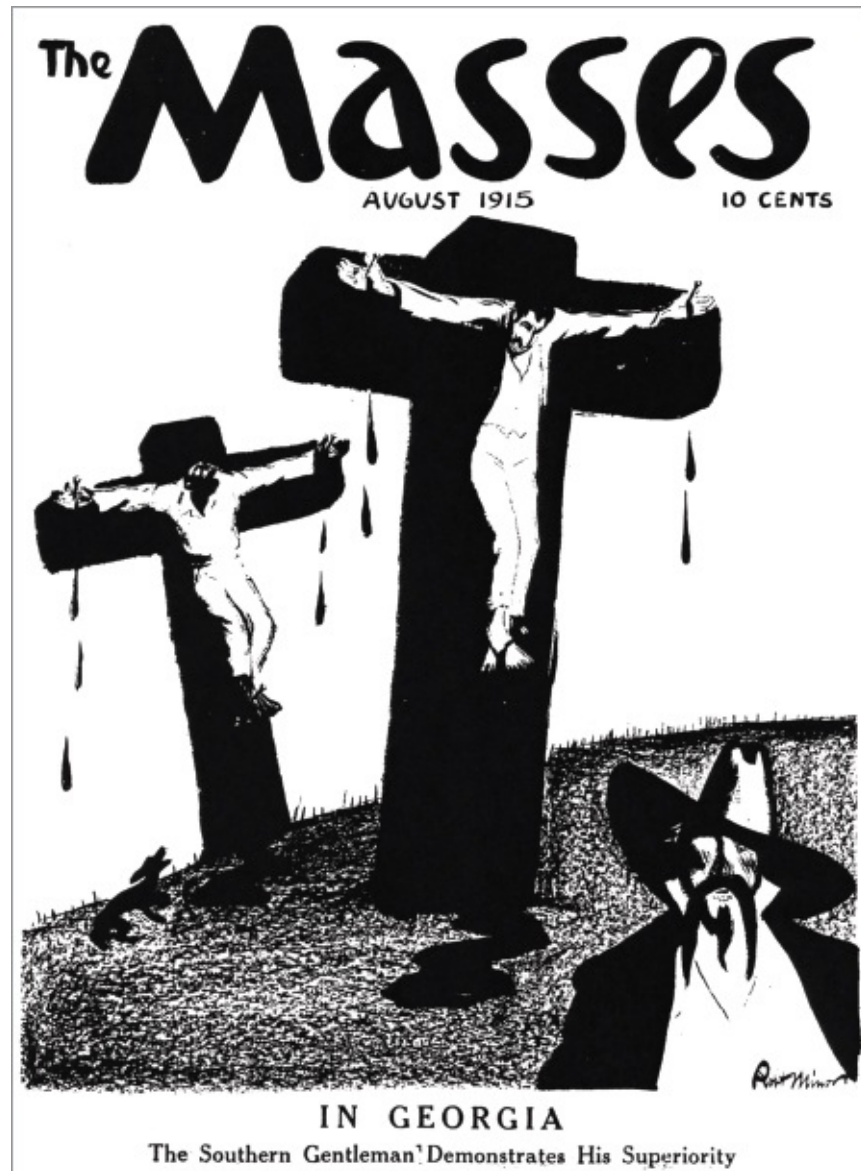
In 1913, lynching provoked the *Masses* to call for Negroes to declare "race war." From their vantage point in Greenwich Village cafés, the intellectuals viewed "the possibility of some concentrated horrors in the South with calmness, because we believe there will be less innocent blood and less misery spread over the history of the next century, if the black citizens arise and demand respect in the name of power, than there will be if they continue to be niggers, and accept the counsels of those of their own race who advise them to be niggers."³¹ The radical press casually tossed about the "n-word," but Max Eastman's usage shows he recognized its derogatory meaning.

The *Crisis* initiated the use of shocking lynching imagery to “convert a shameful secret into a catalyst,” according to art historian Amy Helene Kirschke.³² Robert Minor drew a mob chasing a victim with a noose for a 1917 *Blast* cover, and he invoked the crucifixion in an even more damning illustration of lynching victims nailed to crosses for a 1915 *Masses* cover.³³ Graphic photographs provided more potent visual rhetoric. In 1911, the *Call* published a photograph showing two dead men hanging from a tree in Florida, which later appeared in *ISR*. The victims were Tampa cigar makers on strike, possibly Cuban immigrants. Their description as “Working Men Lynched by Capitalists” epitomizes radical journals’ efforts to create a social movement identity by collapsing all social issues, including race, into a dichotomized class war.³⁴

Reducing Racism to a Symptom of Capitalism

The exclusive focus on class, however, caused socialist leaders to deny the existence of racism. Three years after endorsing the “negro resolution,” in fact, Debs called for revoking it, stating, “We have nothing special to offer the negro, and we cannot make separate appeals to all the races.”³⁵ An indication of his contradictory attitudes toward race, however, is that two months later he cited the resolution to decry racism.³⁶ Yet, in 1908 Debs wrote in the *Call*: “There is no negro question outside of the class question.... [G]ive negroes economic freedom so that they may have the right to work and to receive and enjoy all they produce and the race question ... will be known no more.”³⁷ Such views meant that the radical press failed to fill for black readers most of its prime functions, including providing black socialists with a sense of group identity and community, voice, and a culture. Socialists were unable to conceive the consequences of skin color because they were so fixated on class. Even before the founding of the Socialist Party, *ISR* editor Algie Simons in 1900 believed “the ‘negro question’ has completed its evolution into the ‘labor problem.’”³⁸ The *Call* followed the same reductionist line well into the twentieth century, arguing that the “Negro problem” was “much more a class question.”³⁹ It stated, “We Socialists feel that the most important truth for negroes to grasp is the fact that their problem is the problem of all the exploited and disinherited.”⁴⁰ This commentary contradicted ample evidence in its news columns of rampant racial violence. Hunter reported on Texas race riots; other reports described lynchings, blacks driven out of a Tennessee mining camp, a cabin torched, and more racial

violence in Illinois.⁴¹

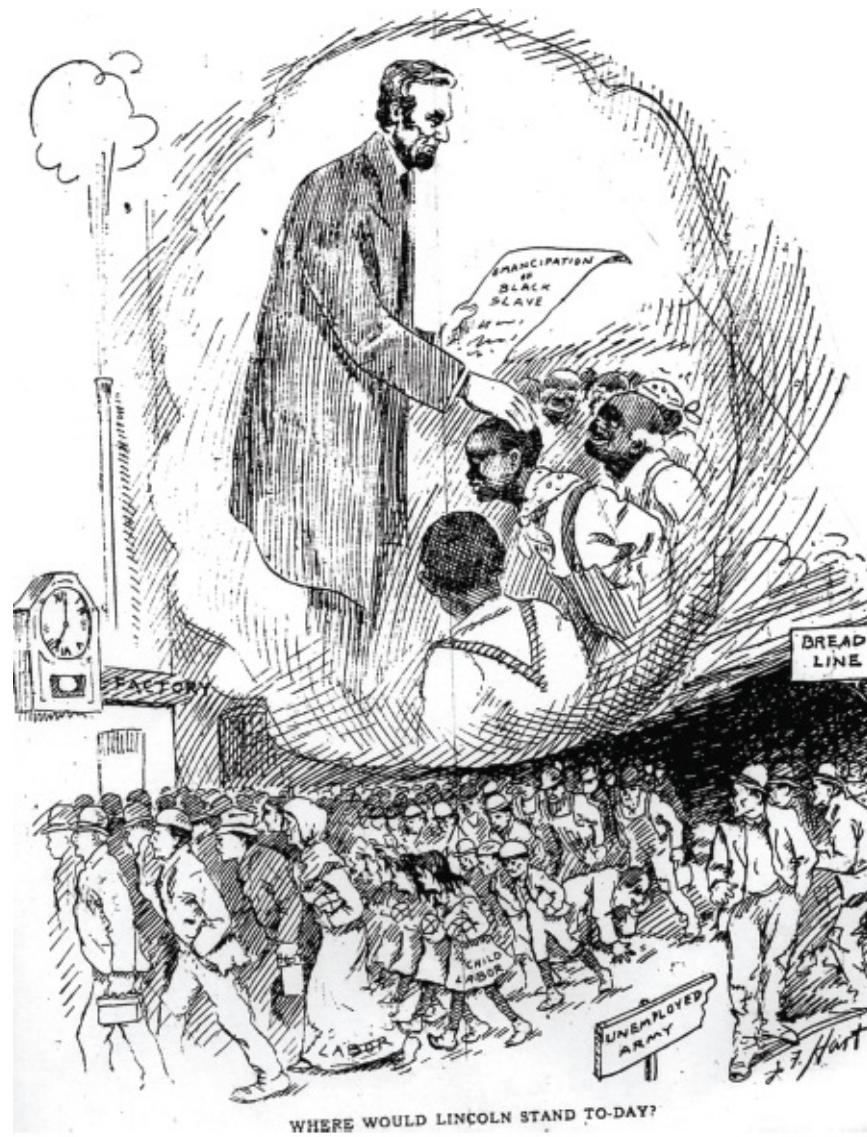


Radicals could be racist, but all agreed lynching was a heinous crime. This Robert Minor cover likens the death of Leo Frank, a Jewish man lynched in Georgia, to the crucifixion of Jesus. *In Georgia: The Southern Gentleman Demonstrates His Superiority*, *Masses*, August 1915.

A 1908 editorial boasted of the newspaper's passive racial stance. The *Call* emphatically pledged it was “doing NOTHING to secure the negro vote.” Its message was a less-than-tantalizing inducement to potential black recruits: “Socialism is frank with the negro. It tells him that in the Socialist movement human nature is not different from what it is elsewhere.”⁴² Radical journals rarely challenged their white audience to consider its own tacit racism. In the *Call*, Debs categorized as class discrimination the 1906 Brownsville Affair, in

which an entire platoon of black soldiers was dishonorably discharged. He equated the discharge with the kidnapping of William Haywood, a blatant example of socialist blinders, and refused to concede the soldiers were victims of racial discrimination.⁴³ The *Call*'s lack of a black voice was striking.

Socialists placed on African Americans the burden of integration into the socialist landscape. An example is a 1901 Clarence Darrow speech before a Negro Men's Forum published in *ISR*. Darrow (who was not officially Socialist) deplored racism and decried lynching, encroaching Jim Crow laws, and job exploitation. Yet he urged blacks to practically beg at the doors of the trade unions that banned them: "Now, trades' unions have refused to admit you, but you ought to knock at their doors; you ought to join with them wherever you can; you ought to make it clear to them that their cause is your cause, and that they cannot afford to fight you because they cannot rise unless they take you with them, and when they are willing to take you, you are willing to go and to help fight the common battle of the poor against the strong."⁴⁴ An opponent of the party's Negro resolution writing in *ISR* in 1904 was worse than condescending. "The negro, when he is intelligent enough to catch a glimmer of what Socialists are driving at, will come to us without a sentimental appeal," he wrote.⁴⁵ The *Call*'s northern, urban editorial writers, who relished denouncing southern industrialists for dividing white and black workers, breezily prescribed the remedy: "To cultivate among white workers and black a mutual feeling of comradeship in the struggle for political and industrial liberty."⁴⁶ Yet the socialist press's racial condescension sabotaged its left-footed efforts to make comrades of African American workers. Debs's vow to "awaken" Negroes was no less insulting to them than it was to white workers. His 1908 pitch in the *Call* for blacks to vote Socialist reeked of paternalism: "The Socialist party knows that the great mass of negroes are ignorant and it is the only party that refuses to traffic in that ignorance."⁴⁷



Radicals frequently likened factory workers to slaves, as shown in this cartoon of President Lincoln reading the Emancipation Proclamation. *Where Would Lincoln Stand To-Day?* *Call*, February 11, 1909.

Radicals were more eager to enlist the iconography of slavery for modern workers than they were to enlist black workers. The radical press equated “wage slaves” with the antebellum South’s chattel slaves. An example is a *Call* cartoon of factory workers, *Where Would Lincoln Stand Today?* Another is a *Wilshire*’s poem, “The White Slave.”⁴⁸ In the *ISR*, Simons claimed northern textile mills thrived because cheap wage slaves were more docile than chattel slaves.⁴⁹ The *Call* linked antebellum slaveholders to postwar southern capitalists who continued to exploit blacks.⁵⁰ An *IW* editorial on the impossibility of family life for poor working men made this dubious comparison: “The negro slaves on the average plantation had their cabins and their homes, such as they were, and they

changed wives no oftener than the modern divorce maniacs. On the whole the negro slave had the best of it.”⁵¹ H. Gaylord Wilshire sanguinely wrote that slaves “were like well-cared for animals on the farm.”⁵²

Racism in the Radical Press

A major sticking point for numerous socialists who advocated economic equality was their distaste for “social equality” between races. A “Southern Socialist” wrote the *Call*: “Social equality means that whites would invite negroes to their homes, and that of course would result in marriage between whites and blacks.... Any man who knows the negro knows that is the all-absorbing, overpowering desire of every negro to possess a white woman ... because Socialism is founded on the brotherhood of man, must it solve the negro problem in America by breeding a nation of mongrels?” An editorial on the same page refuted the author at length, however, and called upon Socialists to champion African Americans’ civil rights.⁵³

Although historian Aileen Kraditor exaggerates when she claims radicals envisioned a uniform society with minimal cultural diversity, she correctly observes most socialists viewed the public and private spheres as distinctly separate—as did virtually all Americans, save anarchists. Socialists saw no contradiction between their calls for brotherhood and racial segregation. Socialist journalist Ernest Untermann told the 1908 Socialist Party convention: “I believe in the brotherhood of man, regardless of races, but ... I am determined that my race shall be supreme in this country and the world.” His characterization of forced mingling as “emasculating” indicates the gendered undercurrent of radicals’ racial fears.⁵⁴ An *ISR* correspondent from Montgomery, Alabama, stated that socialism is primarily an economic and industrial movement that should have “no direct concerns with questions of social equality.” Socialism’s sole duty to the Negro was economic justice. “If he proves as efficient a laborer as the white man,” this correspondent blithely explained, “he will get under Socialism, the same reward.”⁵⁵

As part of their commitment to free speech and robust debate, socialist periodicals allowed southern racists to express their views. A 1901 *ISR* contribution was so noxious that Simons prefaced it with a disclaimer. In it, William Noyes explained socialism would solve the “Negro problem” because the black man “will cease to be a parasite” when he receives his share of what all produce together. Leisure and wealth will refine his coarseness and

intemperance, “and he will cease to be a sexual menace.” Noyes grew exponentially offensive: “Physically the negroes are as a race repulsive to us.... His servility, obtuseness, showiness, superficiality, improvidence, laziness, excessive individuality, grossness, sensuality are everywhere obtrusive, while the opposite virtues of defiance, cleverness, taste, foresight, energy temperateness are rare enough to cause comment.”⁵⁶

Simons offered no disclaimer, however, when a Memphis doctor reasoned in 1903 that Socialists must admit blacks, to stop their degeneration under capitalism because “it is our experience *that it is the white man who is the father of the mulatto*, while the black man largely fills the roll [sic] of the *rapist*.”⁵⁷ A Texan socialist informed *Call* readers in 1911: “We don’t propose to have any one who knows practically nothing of the conditions here to bring discredit upon our movement by sending negroes and sentimentalists here to inflame the colored population with a desire for social equality in the name of Socialism.”⁵⁸ In contrast, Theresa Malkiel, who lectured in the South on socialism, observed, “To the everlasting shame of our Southern comrades, they treat the negroes like dogs.”⁵⁹ And the *Call*’s “Woman’s Sphere,” to which Malkiel contributed, bucked middle-class suffrage journals by opposing a move to restrict woman suffrage to appease Southerners. Bertha Howe reminded readers that socialism opposed race prejudice and championed human equality.⁶⁰

Still, a number of socialist journalists were outright racist. Milwaukee publisher and editor Victor Berger was the most virulent. He wrote in 1902, “There can be no doubt that the negroes and mulattoes constitute a lower race.” He subscribed to the stereotype of the black rapist, and he argued capitalism had exacerbated Negro degeneration as the “savage instincts of his forefathers in Africa come to the surface.”⁶¹ Berger, who also favored excluding Asian immigrants, did not relent once elected to Congress, according to biographer Sally Miller. She wrote, “Those most unrepresented and oppressed of Americans were invisible to the only congressional representative of the workers of the world.”⁶²

Racism infused Wilshire’s opposition to a Senate bill to award pensions to former slaves. “Growing racial insanity” and the rise in rape of white women by black men resulted from forcing African Americans “to compete against a superior race,” he claimed.⁶³ Wilshire’s also asserted white child workers in southern textile mills led harder lives than those of black slave children.⁶⁴ Straight-faced, Wilshire wrote that to avoid Negro domination the South must retain a property restriction on voting. Blacks were unfit to vote and incapable of

governance, he asserted, pointing to Haiti. Despite his own observation that the rare Haitian Negroes removed from poverty and educated went on to succeed in many fields, he failed to make the connection between environment and achievement. He also seemed blind to the class implications. Only the glimmer of socialism, he concluded, without his usual sense of irony, was staving off race war. “The Negro Problem is one of the many Problems of Capitalism that will automatically disappear with Socialism.”⁶⁵

Kate Richards O’Hare also opposed social equality for African Americans. Her long-range plan for solving the Negro problem involved assigning them a section of the nation. Editors of her *Rip-Saw* article describing an outbreak of spinal meningitis in Georgia as “the negro’s revenge” attempted irony in its headline, “Only a Nigger,” but O’Hare was sincere when she described the black man as “vicious, depraved, ignorant and diseased, the product of our system, but his blood is red, he is a human being and he is bound with ties that cannot be severed to every other human being on earth, black and white.”⁶⁶ The *Rip-Saw* distributed thirty-thousand copies of her 1912 essay, “‘Nigger’ Equality,” which assured segregationists “SOCIALISTS WANT TO PUT THE NEGRO WHERE HE CAN’T COMPETE WITH THE WHITE MAN.”⁶⁷

In the eyes of the nation’s most influential socialist publisher, segregation was “natural.” Wayland not only opposed social equality but also supported segregation at on the job. In the cooperative commonwealth, he argued, social democracy followed majority rule. “If in a given workshop the majority prefer to have all white labor, how could the majority be said to govern if there were any power that could prevent them from doing it?” he reasoned. Racial segregation “being the natural tendency of publicly owned and operated industries, it will result, sooner or later, in the separation of the races and thus solve the race question.” He remained as confident blacks would not choose to work where they were not wanted: “This does not mean that the negroes be deported out of the country. It means they will naturally drift to places where they can find employment to live, among and with themselves. This will be the fittest way for them to survive and those who refuse to do it will naturally lose in the struggle for existence, which they would bring upon themselves. There need be no statute law making segregation imperative.”⁶⁸

At the same time, Wayland, incongruously, was an outspoken supporter of black rights in the workplace. He approved of the New Orleans trades council’s threat to strike unless “colored bands” were allowed to participate in a big reunion of Confederate veterans. Wayland believed “this shows that the labor unions are getting at a great truth—that the colored man is an industrial factor,

and as such must be taken into consideration in the effort to obtain the rights of the white working class.”⁶⁹ As that rationale indicates, Wayland framed racial economic equality as a pragmatic benefit for whites, a view that informed his opposition to property qualifications aimed at keeping black men out of southern voting booths. “The poor whites vainly imagine that this is to keep the ‘nigger’ in subjection, ... but they have yet to learn that it is to keep the poor trash, no matter what their color, in subjection to those who have property.”⁷⁰ A key point here is that even though Wayland recognized southern politicians’ manipulation of “race hatred” to maintain power, he failed to grasp how segregation played into their hands.

The national party did reject segregation. Its refusal to grant Louisiana a charter because the state required separate black locals enraged many southern Socialists. In *ISR*, a New Orleans Socialist called for “optional locals” or “sublocals” for blacks, similar to those formed by some Polish, Italian, and Jewish comrades.⁷¹ One anonymous Socialist told Debs he would campaign against the party if it treated blacks equally. Debs, who defied southern social conventions by refusing to speak before segregated audiences, rebutted him at length in *ISR*. “Foolish and vain indeed is the workingman who makes the color of his skin the stepping-stone to his imaginary superiority,” he wrote.⁷² Although Du Bois had his differences with the fluctuating Debs, the *Crisis* editor praised his “manly stand on human rights irrespective of color.”⁷³

ISR toughened its stance against racism after publisher Charles Kerr replaced Simons as editor in 1908. He launched an ambitious series by Jewish Socialist Isaac M. Rubinow, writing under the pseudonym I. M. Robbins.⁷⁴ “The Economic Aspects of the Negro Problem” called race the fundamental divide of the twentieth century, a significant break from doctrinaire party declarations on the primacy of class. Rubinow’s thoughtful history of slavery, abolition, Civil War, Reconstruction, Jim Crow laws, and what he termed the reinstatement of white supremacy, filled hundreds of pages from February 1908 through 1910. The author exhibited an unusually keen understanding of the legal and extralegal conditions that kept southern blacks in bondage. “Not a single day passes in the life of the negro, that he should not be reminded in a more or less cruel way that he cannot enjoy all the civil rights of an American citizen,” he wrote in September 1908. African Americans are forced to live in restricted legal and social conditions, he asserted. Since most are proletarian, it behooved socialists to pay attention to them. He noted the paucity of discussion of black issues in the socialist press, and he labeled as usually prejudiced or simplistically sentimental the few articles on race that did appear. Rubinow argued strongly for increasing

active party opposition to racism. Instead of issuing rhetorical promises about equality, he recommended the party call for removal of all legal restrictions upon African Americans and push trade unions to welcome them. And it should call publicly for social equality. The party, he stated, three years before Du Bois did, had a “sacred duty” to reach out to Negroes.⁷⁵ Yet his June 1909 article, “The Negro’s Point of View,” included not a single interview with an African American.⁷⁶

Hubert Harrison Exposes “The Black Man’s Burden”

The absence of a black socialist voice was filled by Hubert Harrison (1883–1927), “America’s leading Black Socialist” from 1911 to 1914, when the Danish West Indies native worked as a full-time organizer for the New York Socialist Party, served as an assistant editor of the *Masses*, campaigned for Debs, and initiated the Colored Socialist Club. Harrison addressed head-on the relationship between race and class that the Socialist Party ducked. He made major theoretical contributions by calling upon the party to support and recruit African Americans in both the right-wing *Call* and the left-wing *ISR*, which he persuaded to capitalize the word “Negro” as part of his campaign against white supremacy. (The *Call* would not.) “More than any other political leader of his era, Harrison combined class conscious and (anti-white-supremacist) race consciousness in a coherent political radicalism,” states his biographer, Jeffrey Perry. “Among African American leaders of his era Harrison was the most class conscious of the race radicals, and the most race conscious of the class radicals.”⁷⁷ Harrison made the first Marxist analysis of race by a black radical. Perry points out that Harrison’s five-part series on Negroes and socialism in the *Call* at the end of 1911 anticipated by more than a year Du Bois’s *New Review* column that labeled “the Negro problem” the great test of American socialism.⁷⁸ Harrison, in turn, was influenced by Rubinow.

Harrison’s spring 1912 two-part *ISR* article, “The Black Man’s Burden,” inverted the notion of Rudyard Kipling’s 1899 imperialist poem. His analysis of the political, economic, educational, and social burdens that white men placed on American blacks detailed untenable injustice. Negro tenant farmers were but one example. “The accounts are cooked so that the Negro is always in debt to the modern slaveholder,” Harrison wrote.⁷⁹ The accompanying photograph of the business-suited, round-faced, intense young author reinforced the image of a self-possessed member of the New Negro Crowd. In his seminal “Socialism and

the Negro,” in *ISR*’s July number, Harrison elaborated on his analysis of the Socialist Party’s duty to champion the Negro quest for racial equality “on grounds of common sense and enlightened self-interest.”⁸⁰ His stillborn plans to start a Colored Socialist Club of Harlem at the end of 1911, however, demonstrated that African American radicals were not a monolithic block. When Du Bois objected to a separate black socialist organization, calling the voluntary segregation “absurd,” it quickly died.⁸¹ Like Du Bois, however, Harrison also grew disillusioned with the party. He criticized it in a letter the *New Review* declined to publish, and he opposed its expulsion of Haywood. The party suspended him, and he quit in 1914.⁸²

New York’s new weekly *New Review* continued the racial discussion Harrison initiated with essays by Du Bois among others. Robert Lowie persistently challenged the ethnocentric concept of social evolution that ranked white, male society at the top of the social pyramid, and the NAACP’s Ovington expounded on racial inequality.⁸³ She was among *New Review* contributors to a spirited exchange on racial prejudice.⁸⁴ After Du Bois quit the party, he turned to the newly launched journal to address “Socialism and the Negro Problem.” Du Bois’s byline appeared again on February 1, 1913, above his challenge to socialists’ truncated explanation of racism. “I have come to believe that the test of any great movement toward social reform is the Excluded Class,” he wrote. “If you are saving dying babies, whose babies are you going to let die?” He asked: “Can the problem of any group of 10,000,000 be properly considered as ‘aside’ from any program of Socialism? Can the objects of Socialism be achieved so long as the Negro is neglected? Can any great human problem ‘wait’? ... The essence of Social Democracy is that there shall be no excluded or exploited classes in the Socialistic state; that there shall be no man or woman so poor, ignorant or black as not to count one. Is this simply a far-off ideal, or is it a possible program?”⁸⁵

Du Bois remained truer to socialist principles than many of the party’s card-carrying members, according to scholars Mark Van Weinen and Julie Kraft. “Time and again, Du Bois tested the genuineness of socialist parties and programs by whether they regarded proletarian blacks and other people of color as equals.”⁸⁶ In another *New Review* essay, he chided the party’s failure to recruit African Americans or challenge trade-union segregation. “The net result of all this has been to convince the American Negro that his greatest enemy is not the employer who robs him but his white fellow workingman,” Du Bois wrote, producing an unenlightened Negro labor force that was “distinctly capitalistic.”⁸⁷

The IWW Press Promotes Interracial Solidarity

Of all radical organizations, the IWW most consistently practiced the racial equality it preached. When the Socialist Party rejected Harrison, he turned toward the IWW, as did thousands of other ordinary black workers.⁸⁸ As the champion of unskilled labor, the IWW was the only radical group that actively sought to attract African Americans, who comprised some 20 percent of common laborers. While the AFL discriminated against them, the IWW employed a full-time “colored organizer” in the South.⁸⁹ IWW literature addressing “Colored Workers of America” highlighted the shared interests of white and black workers in abolishing the wage system that made every man “a slave who sells himself to the master on the installment plan.”⁹⁰

Solidarity and *IW* published scathing denunciations of racism. “The fight of the negro wage slave is the fight of the white wage slave; the two must rise or fall together,” a 1917 editorial stated.⁹¹ They asked readers to stop using the word “nigger.” “‘Fellow worker’ is the only salutation a rebel should use,” wrote Phineas Eastman, who organized black and white southern timber workers.⁹² Another organizer reiterated, “There are white men, Negro men and Mexican men in this union, but no niggers, greasers or white trash.”⁹³ The southern timber workers’ newspaper, the *Lumberjack*, reserved racist epithets like “niggerscab” and “white trash” for nonunion members of both races.

Unlike socialist journals, the IWW acknowledged blacks faced more exploitation than whites because they were denied education, terrorized by lynching and rape, and routinely denied justice. *Solidarity* appealed to blacks to ignore owners’ attempts to divide workers. “For a generation ... [t]hey have kept us fighting each other—us to secure the ‘white supremacy’ of a tramp and YOU the ‘social equality’ of a vagrant.”⁹⁴ *Justice for the Negro—How He Can Get It* was the title of one Wobbly leaflet. As the NAACP’s Ovington stated, “The I.W.W. has stood with the Negro.”⁹⁵ Du Bois, while a critic of industrial unionism, respected the IWW “because it draws no color line.”⁹⁶ According to Philip Foner, the IWW “is the *only* labor organization in American history never to establish a single segregated local.”⁹⁷ Nonetheless, one *Solidarity* contributor assured readers that integrating locals did not mean blacks and whites had to meet in the same hall.⁹⁸ Although he probably reflected many members’ views, his statement was contrary to IWW policy.

“The IWW freely admits the negro, barring neither race, color nor creed,” IWW leader Haywood told *ISR* readers in 1916.⁹⁹ An *IW* contributor wrote,

“The Chinese, Japanese, or Negro worker has the same right to life, liberty (whatever that means) and the pursuit of happiness as any other worker.”¹⁰⁰ A Wobbly told *ISR*, “We want every person engaged in industry, whether male or female, white or black, to have a voice in making the rules under which they must work.”¹⁰¹ Haywood contrasted the IWW’s welcoming attitude toward minorities to AFL discrimination against blacks, Asians, and other immigrants. Further, AFL apprenticeships revealed despotism, and its dues were prohibitive.¹⁰² *IW* stated, “This so-called labor movement has the nerve to call the negro a scab when he takes the only opportunity for employment that is offered to him.”¹⁰³ The IWW walked the talk by organizing black and white dockworkers in interracial locals in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Orleans.¹⁰⁴

The IWW also actively encouraged solidarity among ethnic groups. Foreign-language periodicals were an important part of its print culture. In 1910, the IWW published journals in French, Japanese, Polish, and Spanish.¹⁰⁵ As part of its mission to recruit workers of all nationalities to its international union, *IW* occasionally published non-English articles. The April 29, 1909, issue, for example, included the IWW preamble in Chinese. Another article was in German, and another in Italian. Chicago headquarters literature included “Why Strikes Are Lost” in Lithuanian and the report to the International Congress in Italian. *La Union Industrial*, “the only Spanish paper in the United States teaching Revolutionary Industrial Unionism,” operated in Phoenix in 1910.¹⁰⁶ By 1913, it was joined by a second Spanish newspaper in Los Angeles, *La Huelga General*.¹⁰⁷ In the East, *Cultura Obrera* served the IWW’s New York marine transport workers union beginning in 1913. *El Rebelde*, edited by *revoltoso* Aurelio Azuara, soon followed.¹⁰⁸

The IWW’s Interracial Organizing in Louisiana

The most dramatic alliance between white and black workers was the IWW-organized strike of western Louisiana timber workers against the industry’s “backwoods totalitarianism” between 1910 and 1913.¹⁰⁹ Timber, the state’s only industry, and its company towns, which mushroomed at the turn of the century, disrupted rural residents’ social and economic life and relationship with the forest.¹¹⁰ Wages were as low as \$1.25 for a ten-or twelve-hour day. One state study found the lumber camps violated every labor law on Louisiana’s books.¹¹¹

By 1910, sixty-three thousand men worked in the mills and piney woods, more than 60 percent of them African American. The many black workers who migrated from Gulf Coast sugar plantations had an unusually militant heritage, which included a Knights of Labor strike during the 1886 harvest. White timber workers, mainly local farmers, also resisted the assembly-line culture of industrial capitalism and the destructive nature of logging. “Mechanized logging was agriculture in reverse,” as historian James Green observes.¹¹² Workers especially rankled at being paid in scrip, forcing them to trade at the overpriced company store.¹¹³

Populists first tilled the piney uplands’ fertile radical grounds. Socialists inherited their followers, and more than a third of the region’s residents voted for Debs in 1912. These rural southerners also received an education in the evils of capitalism from several socialist newspapers that enjoyed a large circulation in the region: the *Appeal to Reason*, *National Rip-Saw*, and Texas’s *Rebel*. “The radicals couched their revolutionary appeals in a Southern agrarian idiom which drew effectively on the discontent of a poor, uneducated rural people without resorting to racism,” according to Green.¹¹⁴ IWW organizer Eastman noted African Americans already possessed race consciousness because of their shared oppression. “It is not a hard matter to make the negro class-conscious,” he told *ISR* readers. “He is bound to be rebellious.”¹¹⁵ The unskilled, unorganized timber workers also were attracted to the IWW’s direct-action approach. Although Foner argues the IWW ban on politics hindered black recruitment, it would seem that since southern blacks were virtually disfranchised they would welcome an alternative to the ballot to effect social change. As one Wobbly pamphlet claimed, “The only power of the Negro is his power as a worker; his one weapon is the strike.”¹¹⁶

In 1910, lumbermen organized the Brotherhood of Timber Workers (BTW) to challenge the northern lumber barons they so despised. Haywood apprised *ISR* readers of the bitter strike that followed. Mill owners cut operations to four days a week to squeeze out the union; three thousand men lost jobs in eleven mills, which the owners closed immediately.¹¹⁷ Barely alive, the BTW affiliated with the IWW in May 1912, in part because the latter promised to finance a union newspaper. At the organizational meeting, radical New Orleans organizer and editor Covington Hall and Haywood found white and black members meeting in separate buildings, per police orders. Hall and Haywood persuaded them to move into the same building, where the pair declared that all or none would go to jail if police arrived. None did.¹¹⁸ The union’s mass meeting at the Alexandria Opera House later that month marked the first racially integrated public meeting

in the city's history.¹¹⁹ Union demands included \$2 pay for a ten-hour day. In the *ISR*, Haywood praised the brotherhood's interracial solidarity.¹²⁰ Hall later recalled the timber industry's failure to divide black and white workers. "We farmers and workers will have to stick together," he quoted a black farmer. "So long as I have a pound of meat or a peck of corn, no man, white or colored, who goes out in this strike will starve, nor will his children."¹²¹

Wobbly Journalist Covington Hall

Hall was another of the romantic poet-journalists drawn to the IWW like bees to honey. His unlikely résumé included a term as adjutant general of the United Sons of Confederate Veterans and a stint as assistant editor at Oscar Ameringer's socialist *Labor World*. Ameringer recalled him as the best-dressed, handsomest man in New Orleans at the start of the twentieth century.¹²² The scion of the southern elite began his turn toward radicalism by age ten, when the sheriff auctioned his family's heavily mortgaged sugar plantation in 1891. Historian David Roediger argues that Hall's southern heritage shaped his rebel sensibilities. His Marxist take on the Civil War was that that northern industrialists invaded the South to capture an untapped market; to justify his radical call for racial unity, Hall summoned the southern myth of benevolent slavery.¹²³ A southern gentleman's manners surfaced in Hall's call for issuing warnings of sabotage as the "manly and honorable way" to use the tactic, according to Roediger.¹²⁴

Hall learned more about class struggle while tramping for jobs and reading socialist literature. He briefly belonged to the Socialist Labor Party before joining the IWW soon after its 1905 creation. These encounters led him to blame capitalism for fanning race hatred.¹²⁵ By 1907, Hall had earned a reputation as an ardent advocate of racial integration and industrial unionism, partly by working with timber workers and an interracial group of New Orleans dockworkers during a 1907 strike. Ameringer's experience working with Hall in New Orleans convinced him that blacks were intelligent and good strikers. It inspired him to argue for "a class-conscious politics that would unite black and white working people."¹²⁶ The black dockworkers published the *Republican Liberator*, whose motto was "Justice for All Irrespective of Race or Condition."

Wobblies recited Hall's verse in the hobo jungles, and it appeared throughout the radical press.¹²⁷ Ameringer called him the "poet of forgotten men."¹²⁸ Many

of his verses describe Jesus as a hunted radical.¹²⁹ “The common thread throughout all Hall’s Miltonesque and devilish tributes is an emphasis on rebellion,” according to Roediger. Racial paternalism laced his dialect-laden poems about African Americans. Yet, as Roediger points out, his respect for primitivism aligned his best poetry to the racially self-conscious writing of such black civil rights pioneers as Du Bois and Paul Robeson.¹³⁰ He also imbued his primitivism with a socialist flare, as in these lines:

I’d like to be a savage fer a little while agen,
En go out in the forest where there ain’t no businessmen;
Where I’d never hear the clatter of their factories and things,
But just the low, soft buzzin’ uv the hummin’s crimson wings.¹³¹

Hall’s journalistic talents came to the fore when three union men and a guard were shot dead at a Grabow sawmill rally on July 7, 1912, in what the strikers called a company ambush. Fifty-eight union members were confined to the Lake Charles jail on charges of conspiracy to murder the guard. Hall’s first task was to issue a defense bulletin condemning the horrific jail conditions, which he sent to four newspapers. To his surprise, the *Houston Chronicle* put it on its front page. “A roar of anger went up in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma,” Hall recalled. “Never before or since have I seen such solidarity of labor.”¹³² Every Louisiana union supported the defendants. Throughout the trial, Hall distributed the weekly defense bulletin, mailing bundles to trusted men who handed it out across western Louisiana and eastern Texas. The judge threatened but did not follow through on charging Hall with contempt of court over one of the bulletin’s many satirical bromides. Hall and union secretary Jay Smith also filed reports for *Solidarity*.¹³³ In *ISR*, Hall took the trial as an opportunity to urge northern blacks to join the One Big Union.¹³⁴ IWW publicity played no small role in the October 31, 1912, acquittal of all defendants.

Hall became editor of the long-promised *Lumberjack* on January 9, 1913, to support the beleaguered strikers. It scrambled to provide the IWW version of more violence in Merryville.¹³⁵ When the American Lumber Company blacklisted fifteen white men who testified in the Grabow trial, twelve hundred white and black members of the weakened union went on strike. They sang Wobbly rebel songs when jailed on frivolous charges and stuck with the strike when released. Merryville officials, lumber company guards, and police, however, combined to quash the strike and kick the strikers out of town. Their strategy included importing African American scabs, whom Eastman was sure

only needed a little “union propaganda” to turn them.¹³⁶ *IW* addressed Louisiana blacks in page-one appeals that explained industrialists encouraged white supremacy to divide and conquer black and white workers.

Historian Merl Reed’s comparison of three newspaper accounts of events in Merryville offers a case study of how radical media can counter dominant media. The *Alexandria Town Talk* reported from ninety miles away that the timber workers’ headquarters “were very quietly visited” on February 19, 1913. The unnamed visitors neatly packed up their belongings and their soup kitchen and shipped them to an IWW office. *Town Talk* reported, “There was no violence.” The *American Press* in Lake Charles, forty miles away, described citizens tearing down and burning the union soup shack. More than two thirds of the town’s three hundred union men, their wives, and children followed an order to leave town.¹³⁷ The IWW *Lumberjack*’s account bore the headline “Class War in Merryville.”

“Men, born and raised in Louisiana, have been beaten, shot and hunted down as though they were wild beasts,” Hall wrote.¹³⁸ The *Lumberjack*’s February 27 account described beatings and shootings by some three hundred drunken, gun-toting “scabs” that roamed the streets. “Some one asked about the law in Louisiana. Dr. Knight [leader of the Good Citizens League and company physician] pounded his chest and said: ‘This is all the law we want.’”¹³⁹ Affidavits by two BTW members corroborated beatings. Besides harnessing local political and police power against the workers, the lumber companies used their financial clout to silence the IWW. At the end of March, the Alexandria print shop refused to print the *Lumberjack*, under orders from lumber owners who threatened to withdraw their patronage.¹⁴⁰

Although the IWW’s Eastman believed the episode marked a big step toward the One Big Union, the Merryville story did not end happily. The strike collapsed in June, spelling the end of industrial unionism in the piney woods. Prosperity and suppression during World War I destroyed any remnants of Louisiana radicalism. Historian Grady McWhiney believes the IWW made a critical mistake by refusing to admit sharecroppers because they “owned” property.¹⁴¹ The short-lived *Lumberjack* was succeeded by the *Voice of the People*, which began July 17, 1913, in New Orleans, also edited by Hall, who moved it to Portland, Oregon, in July 1914, where it soon disappeared. Hall later published *Rebellion* (1915–16), a monthly radical magazine subtitled *Made Up of Dreams and Dynamite*.¹⁴²

The IWW's Spanish-Language Press

The IWW also organized Mexican and Anglo miners. Its Spanish-language newspapers, *La Union Industrial* in Phoenix and *El Rebelde* in Los Angeles, “exercised a key role” in educating Mexican miners about industrial unionism on both sides of the border, from Arizona’s Black Hills snaking south through the Sonoran Desert.¹⁴³ Those distant periodicals were no match for southeastern Arizona’s *Bisbee Daily Review*, instrumental in the largest single incident of vigilantism in U.S. history. The July 12, 1917, front page carried the Cochise County sheriff’s warning to women and children to stay off the copper boomtown’s streets that day.¹⁴⁴ Since late June, about half of some four thousand miners had gone on strike, ten times more than belonged to the IWW, against Phelps Dodge Corporation, owner of both the town’s lucrative Copper Queen mine and the *Daily Review*. Mine companies commonly published or held financial interests in Arizona newspapers, and events in Bisbee proved their worth. From July 1 through July 11, 1917, the *Daily Review* produced twenty anti-IWW editorials. A July 7 page-one cartoon branded the IWW part of a German plot to incite rebellion, and the *Review* appealed to patriotism to stop the IWW menace to the war effort. Rumors about stockpiled dynamite flew, although the strike was peaceful.

Race was a key factor in the strike. Historian Phil Mellinger argues the Bisbee deportation was one result of “concerted counterattacks by corporate and political powers against the potent, ethnically unified work force” of Anglo and Mexican miners that had been growing in Arizona since 1915.¹⁴⁵ By 1917, more than five thousand Mexicans belonged to American IWW locals, lured by its commitment against the mine industry’s discrimination against Hispanic workers.¹⁴⁶ Of Copper Queen miners, 13 percent were of Mexican descent; one strike demand called for abolishing company policy that restricted them to the lowest-paying jobs.¹⁴⁷ With rifle bursts from the Mexican Revolution practically echoing in the border town, Bisbee officials and mine owners eyed striking Mexicans as dangerous revolutionaries. The many Austrians, Croats, and Slavs workers also were suspect. Mellinger faults IWW headquarters for failing to send requested literature in foreign languages to help unite Bisbee’s diverse immigrants during the strike. The Los Angeles Mexican IWW local refused a request to move *El Rebelde* to Phoenix, further hampering communication.¹⁴⁸ These shortcomings indicate the IWW lacked the infrastructure to turn its interracial rhetoric into meaningful direct action. The Phelps Dodge deportation, however, highlights the near omnipotence of corporate powers over workers.

While newsboys slipped the *Review* under doors on July 12, Phelps Dodge ordered the local Western Union to shut down its telegraph wires. By mid-morning, an armed posse of two thousand men had rousted from their beds more than two thousand strikers and sympathizers and a few women and children. One man who refused to go was shot dead in his bed, but not before he shot and killed one of the posse. The posse marched prisoners at gunpoint several miles to a baseball park, where 1,186 men who refused to sign a pledge to return to work were loaded into railroad cattle cars that dumped them at a New Mexican desert hamlet.¹⁴⁹ The roundup netted a disproportionate number of Mexicans—268, followed by 167 Americans, 82 Finns, 67 Irish, 40 Austrians, 35 Croatians, and men from some twenty other nations. The *Bisbee Daily Review* enthused, “It was a blow at traitors, spies and anarchists that will make this clique tremble everywhere west of the Rocky Mountains.”¹⁵⁰

Mainstream media nationwide were equally indifferent at best to the flagrant violation of civil rights.¹⁵¹ Only the radical press and a few reform magazines such as the *Nation* seemed concerned by the unprecedented assault on civil rights.¹⁵² “The present administration is completely ignoring the crimes of Bisbee,” *Solidarity* stated.¹⁵³ The newspaper, by then edited by Chaplin in Chicago, published several lengthy accounts. The IWW local’s press committee filed a lengthy report for the July 21 issue, followed by another datelined from the New Mexico deportation camp the next week, which emphasized the deportees’ solidarity.¹⁵⁴ *Solidarity* published a front-page cartoon that likened the deportation to German atrocities in Belgium, which Boardman Robinson replicated in the *Masses* in September.¹⁵⁵ A *Solidarity* editorial revealed the IWW’s grandiose view of itself when it categorized the deportees with some of history’s most famous martyrs. “Did the burning of martyrs successfully inhibit the rise of primitive Christianity?” it asked. “Did the Boston massacre thwart the aims of the American Revolution or the killing of John Brown and his sons stop the liberation of the chattel slaves of the South?”¹⁵⁶ *Appeal to Reason* decried the “industrial despotism” that controlled the town “in utter defiance of American laws and the rights of American citizens.”¹⁵⁷ Although a presidential commission concurred several months later, the Bisbee deportation made it clear that wartime had created conditions for legitimizing the IWW’s extermination.¹⁵⁸ When mainstream media did protest, instead of the vigilantes they blamed the federal government for failing to offer a legal method for ridding communities of the IWW. The *Chicago Tribune* concurred, “It is obvious that we must strengthen our laws and stiffen our prosecution of this kind of

treachery.”¹⁵⁹ The contrast between mainstream and radical press commentary illustrates the important role of an alternative media in challenging dominant hegemony. A century later, few Americans would defend authorities’ flagrant abuse of power at Bisbee.

The Anarchist Analysis of Racial Oppression

Anarchist journalists offered a more sophisticated analysis of the “Negro problem” than the socialists’ reductivist collapse of racism into a symptom of class conflict. “It will be solved like other social problems: through a clearer conception of underlying causes, better understanding of necessary racial difference, mutual appreciation, and solidaric feeling,” a 1908 *Mother Earth* essay stated. The magazine cited racial oppression as evidence of the futility of government and law. “The Civil War, though it abolished black chattel slavery, completely failed to emancipate the negro,” wrote editor Alexander Berkman, and laws codified black inferiority. “To-day we realize the crying need of a new proclamation of independence, of economic emancipation.”¹⁶⁰ In 1909, *Mother Earth* ran the *ISR* series by Rubinow on economics and the “Negro problem.” The magazine’s solution to racial discrimination remained as vague, however, as other amorphous anarchist pronouncements on the ideal society and offered no practical guidelines for achieving racial unity.

The magazine did frequently assert its opposition to racism in its acerbic “Observations and Comments.” *Mother Earth*’s Russian Jewish publisher and editor effortlessly drew a parallel between St. Louis’s 1910 race riots and Russian pogroms against Jews.¹⁶¹ They observed that racism was not limited to the South. “Few white people in this enlightened land have risen to the level of recognizing in the negro a fellow man, a social equal,” the section noted in 1909. “Even some radicals are not entirely free from this most stupid of prejudices.”¹⁶² The *Blast* celebrated black resistance, which publisher Berkman found more interesting than racial prejudice.¹⁶³ Other anarchist journals frequently attacked racism, including the Home colony’s *Demonstrator*. Few African Americans identified as anarchists, but an exception was publisher Lucy Parsons, who has been called the “most prominent black woman radical of the late nineteenth century.”¹⁶⁴ The widow of executed Haymarket scapegoat Albert Parsons was partly African American and Hispanic, although she did not advertise her racial heritage. But as publisher of the *Liberator* (1905–06), she denounced violence against African Americans.¹⁶⁵

Racist Stereotypes in Radical Visual Rhetoric

Although most radical periodicals denounced racism, most (except the sober anarchists) also published jokes and cartoons that traded on deeply inscribed notions of white supremacy.¹⁶⁶ Art historian Donald Dewey suggests that cartooning's greatest historical impact in the late nineteenth century was its dissemination of racial and ethnic stereotypes that spilled into the twentieth century.¹⁶⁷ "White artists, even in journals sympathetic to issues in the black community, did not treat African Americans with respect," observes Kirschke.¹⁶⁸ The disrespect extended to the radical press. Blacks usually were absent from radical visual rhetoric, but illustrations that did appear usually categorized African Americans as "other" and often were derogatory. They associated blacks with none of the empowering qualities that social identity theory posits are requisite for building a social movement's group identity. *IW* even occasionally succumbed to the era's ubiquitous racist humor.¹⁶⁹ As Kraditor observes, a gap existed between *IWW* "members' attitudes and official theory" regarding race.¹⁷⁰

And in the *Masses*, Kirschke states, "African Americans were shown with respect one month and as grotesque caricature the next, sometimes in quite vicious images."¹⁷¹ Insults sometimes seemed unconscious. Sloan, for example, intended only to comment on the dire lives of southern mill workers in a sketch of wraith-like whites trudging to a factory under the eyes of a black boy who eats a watermelon—the stereotypical symbol of black indolence. Titled *Race Superiority*, its social satire relies on an inversion of the idea that blacks are inferior to whites.¹⁷² *Masses* artist Stuart Davis's sketches of everyday African American life, however, won praise from black poet Claude McKay as "the most superbly sympathetic drawings of Negroes done by an American."¹⁷³ Yet a *Call* correspondent accused Davis of deliberately ridiculing African Americans.¹⁷⁴ When a reader complained in 1915 that the *Masses's* cartoons "depress the negroes themselves and confirm the whites in their contemptuous and scornful attitude," a defensive Max Eastman replied the images reflected the magazine's commitment to "realism." He acknowledged the cartoons represented "this conflict between the aims of propaganda and the aims of art which is ever present to our editorial board."¹⁷⁵

Cartoonists' affinity for paradox often relied on unconscious racist assumptions. A 1914 cartoon in the *ISR*, for example, depicted an African in tribal dress scanning newspaper headlines about the European war. He says,

“Ugh! The dirty heathen!” The joke, of course, is the black man is supposed to be the dirty heathen.¹⁷⁶ Leslie Fishbein observes that *Masses* artists often emphasized the comic aspects instead of political realities of their black subjects. A 1914 cartoon by George Bellows, for example, features an encounter between a wealthy white woman and a black woman she interviews for a job. When the potential employer asks her to elaborate on her “professional” experience, she replies in dialect, “Well, Mam—Ah takes yo’ for a broad-minded lady—Ah don’t mind tellin’ you Ah been of them white slaves.” Fishbein comments, “The sexual and economic victimization of the black woman are irrelevant to the humor of the sketch, which is more verbal and aesthetic than political.”¹⁷⁷

Wilshire’s turn-of-the-century *Challenge* featured the blatantly racist cartoons of Frederick Oppen, a popular syndicated Hearst cartoonist.¹⁷⁸ The *Call* in its early years frequently depicted blacks as buffoons or savages.¹⁷⁹ A 1908 cartoon shows a black boy after a rain contemplating a yard full of watermelons. The caption in dialect compounds the demeaning stereotype: “Weal, I declare! Ef dem watarmelungs mus’n a’ bus’ in de night a’ flood de patch!”¹⁸⁰ Meanwhile, radical editors professed frustration with their failure to recruit blacks even as Debs made eloquent pleas for interracial brotherhood.¹⁸¹ It is difficult to imagine an African American warming to the Socialist Party, however, after reading this *Progressive Woman* joke about an African American after his first socialist meeting:

Old Darkey: Say brudder Samo, do yo’know w’at de ‘Mysterial Deception ob History’ am?

Brudder Sambo: No sah, I sho don’t.

Old Darkey: De ‘Mysterial Deception ob History’ am, when de capitalist hab extracted all ob de supper value from de poletarat wot dey hab left wont’ buy dere brekfas an dinnah, an why de poletarat will toe to go wid out eating am de “Mysterial Deception of History.”¹⁸²

Conclusion

Such misguided attempts at humor offer a compressed explanation of black Americans’ indifference—if not hostility—to socialism. The radical press largely failed to provide people of color with the group identity and community a social movement needs to succeed. Radical press imagery often excluded or offended important constituencies. Some of the radical press’s visual rhetoric unwittingly

contained disempowering messages that surely repelled possible converts. These characteristics reflected rather than created shortcomings in radical thought, which was inconsistent at best regarding race. The unprecedented efforts of the IWW to forge an interracial industrial union appear even more exceptional against the cultural backdrop of pervasive racism. The theoretical contributions of Du Bois, Harrison, and the unsung Rubinow in tying race consciousness and class consciousness make them vital links to the civil rights and Black Power movements. The contents of white radical journals, however, reveal that most radicals remained blind to the burdens of race, an inseparable part of black identity. The radical utopian vision remained a white man's land.

CHAPTER NINE

“WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW”

WOMEN AND THE RADICAL PRESS

... the most revolutionary doctrine yet preached by brave men and women.

SAM SCHMALHAUSEN, “Motherhood by Coercion”

■ The stories the Lower East Side immigrant women told visiting nurse Margaret Sanger sickened her: ingesting herbal concoctions, stirring turpentine into coffee, rolling down tenement stairs, inserting sticks or shoe hooks or knitting needles into their uteruses. On Saturday nights, Sanger sometimes saw one hundred women enter the shabby buildings where abortionists conducted a lucrative, if illegal, trade. She grew angry as she realized that legal and economic bars to the most basic information about procreation condemned these women to a constant state of pregnancy.¹ When Sanger began sharing these stories in her lectures to Socialist women’s groups in her role as a New York party women’s organizer, they proved so popular that the *Call* woman’s editor Anita Block asked her to write a column. Sanger’s series, “What Every Mother Should Know,” on the Sunday magazine woman’s page in 1911 relied largely on flowers to help mothers explain sexual reproduction to children, but writing about sex still shocked. Her more daring “What Every Girl Should Know,” which debuted in November 1912, cost the *Call* a few subscribers. Sanger’s frank discussion of pregnancy, abortion, menstruation, and masturbation was virtually unprecedented in daily journalism. The February 9, 1913, column on syphilis proved the last straw for the Post Office’s moral censors, who ruled the *Call* nonmailable and obscene under the Comstock laws. The big blank box reserved for Sanger’s column for that date declared:

“What Every Girl Should Know,”
NOTHING!
By Order of the Post Office Department²

■ ■ ■

Sanger omitted mention of her socialist *Call* column from *My Fight for Birth Control*, her 1931 account of her monumental campaign for women’s right to control their own bodies. By then the former Socialist, Wobbly organizer, and free-lover had shed her radical red cloak and draped herself in middle-class respectability. Sanger’s reticence has obscured the seminal role the radical press played in the birth-control movement’s early years. After tracing how the radical press provided a voice for women desperate for contraception information, this chapter will explore the many facets of women and the radical press, including the latter’s role as a forum for debate on women’s place in the social revolution, a radical woman’s print culture comprising women’s columns and the socialist *Progressive Woman*, and the radical press treatment of gender issues such as woman suffrage, prostitution, marriage, the workplace, and women in war.

Framing “Voluntary Motherhood” as a Class Issue

Radical press support for legalizing contraception—also known as voluntary motherhood or free motherhood—was crucial because in its early years the movement got a hostile reception in the popular press.³ Legalizing contraception was a class issue on several levels. *Masses* artist Kenneth Chamberlain’s *Family Limitation—Old Style* graphically connected unwanted pregnancy with poverty in its depiction of a shabbily clothed woman dumping a baby into a river.⁴ In a cover illustration that in one panel showed an upper-class woman obtaining contraceptives from a doctor, who in the other panel denies them to a poor woman, anarchist *Blast* explicitly made the point that birth control was a class issue.⁵ *Blast* and *Mother Earth* charged the ruling classes needed the poor to bear children to become soldiers and workers.⁶ Socialist *ISR* claimed the rich opposed birth control for the poor because it would make them independent.⁷ The Industrial Workers of the World’s *Solidarity* supported birth control because small families reduced the labor pool and increased wages. The IWW’s western *Industrial Worker* broached the broader topic of female autonomy when it editorialized, “We don’t believe that woman is merely a sock-darning incubator.”⁸



The radical press pioneered the fight for birth control, which it framed as a class issue, as in this untitled cover by artist Lydia Gibson. *Blast*, February 12, 1916.

Yet no periodical hoisted the birth-control petard until 1914, when Sanger directly confronted the Comstock laws' classification of contraception information as obscenity. The masthead of her provocatively titled *Woman Rebel* carried the IWW slogan, "No Gods, No Masters." "Its pages crackled with an anger and rebelliousness that were not found in any other woman's paper in the country," asserts historian Alex Baskin.⁹ Sanger also courted arrest by publishing a sexually explicit pamphlet, *Family Limitation*, which framed birth control in the IWW's radical rhetoric: "The working class can use direct action by refusing to supply the market with children to be exploited, by refusing to

populate the earth with slaves.”¹⁰ IWW locals and socialist women’s clubs distributed the illicit pamphlet.

Sanger’s militancy germinated in Lawrence, where she helped organize the well-publicized evacuation of mill workers’ children and struck up a lifelong friendship with Wobbly organizer Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. Twice arrested while working with Wobblies trying to organize a Pennsylvania silk factory in summer 1912, Sanger resigned from the Socialist Party when it expelled her close friend William Haywood. She and her architect husband, William, mixed with radicals of every stripe, who trekked uptown to their Washington Heights home. Besides Haywood, they included his lover, socialist lawyer Jessie Ashley; Max Eastman; John Reed; Walter Lippmann; Alexander Berkman; and Emma Goldman.¹¹ Like Sanger, Goldman had worked as a nurse and midwife on the Lower East Side, which also seared into her the toll unwanted pregnancy and amateur abortions exacted upon poor immigrant women.¹²

Emma Goldman’s Campaign for Birth Control

Goldman had stood virtually alone at the turn-of-the-century podium when she first broached the heretical notion of voluntary motherhood. It was she who introduced Sanger to neo-Malthusianism. The European socialist movement heralded birth control as an essential part of the class struggle so the masses could control the size of the labor force and their individual families.¹³ Although the Charles Kerr Publishing Company produced birth-control information as early as 1894, it took care to avoid antagonizing Anthony Comstock. Kerr published a leaflet, “A Hygienic Check to Conception,” in conjunction with a book, *Aedoeology*, but its contract stated Kerr would provide the leaflet in a sealed envelope only with copies sold to individuals. It did not mail the leaflet or sell it to minors.¹⁴ The post office did ban from the mails a 1905 *ISR* issue that contained a prostitution exposé.¹⁵

The weekly *Socialist Woman* newspaper dared only reference contraception in sentimental fiction about the horrors of enforced pregnancy. A 1908 tale told of a young, pregnant mother of three beaten by her drunken husband. She loses the baby but escapes, converts to socialism, and helps unwed mothers.¹⁶ Another recounted the funeral of the mother of a flock of unplanned children. “There was no race suicide in her life!” one character exclaims. “No! It was race murder.”¹⁷ The comment inverted the racist assumptions behind eugenics, a since-discredited movement to improve hereditary traits by increasing births among

groups perceived mentally and physically superior.¹⁸ Anglo-American proponents in the xenophobic 1910s feared race suicide would result from the higher birth rate of the rapidly growing non-Anglo immigrant population and the lower rate among Anglos. Radicals largely resisted the elitist rationale of eugenics in their arguments for making birth control accessible to the poor.

Tragic accounts of illegal abortions also indirectly addressed the need for birth control.¹⁹ In 1913, *Mother Earth* boldly blamed abortion on birth control censors. Goldman called women who had abortions “soldiers in the battle for their physical and spiritual freedom.”²⁰ Her emphasis on freedom embodied the anarchist reverence for individual sovereignty. It moved the birth-control debate beyond the Socialist Party’s limited view that contraception mattered because it enabled the working class to control the labor pool. *Mother Earth* called for a sexual revolution: it hammered away at sexual double standards and oppressive notions of immorality.²¹ Voltairine De Cleyre dismissed the myth women were uninterested in sex.²² Contributor John Coryell criticized corsets, which confined women from fully realizing “the joy of life.”²³ The free-loving, outspoken Goldman’s views shaped the decade’s *New Woman*, whose search for self-fulfillment included sexual satisfaction.²⁴ Birth control was fundamental to that agenda. At the opposite end of the radical spectrum, *Christian Socialist* “prided itself in its advocacy of “pure-sex life and a monogamous home,” which it claimed won many socialist converts by countering free-love preaching.²⁵

Sanger took center stage in the incipient birth-control movement when postal officials almost immediately upon their printing began seizing issues of *Woman Rebel* in 1914 and declared them nonmailable.²⁶ Federal authorities indicted her on three counts of mailing obscenity and a fourth of “inciting murder and assassination.” The latter stemmed from a July 14 essay, “A Defense of Assassination,” which reiterates the depth of Sanger’s prewar political radicalism.²⁷ It was her challenge to the Comstock laws, however, that captured the public imagination and allied the anarchist, socialist, and IWW press. Sanger fled to England, from where she wrote Goldman she was “keenly disappointed” by *Mother Earth*’s silence on her case. “I expect very little publicity on this ‘delicate subject’ from the capitalist press, but naturally I look for an attitude of solidarity and comradeship from the radical press,” she wrote.²⁸ Goldman published her letter and added a note blaming the lapse on her busy schedule and Sanger’s failure to keep the magazine posted.²⁹ Sanger continued to communicate from London with her American supporters via *Mother Earth*.³⁰ Although historians emphasize Sanger and Goldman’s rivalry, the latter’s

magazine solicited funds for Sanger's court cases and urged readers to write officials to support her.³¹

Mother Earth's campaign for birth control shows how social-movement media can penetrate media hegemony. Goldman dismissed criticism of activists who broke the law by distributing contraceptive literature by arguing, "It is precisely such foolish action" that won the attention of such "ultra conservative papers as *Harper's Weekly* and the *New York Times*."³² Postal inspectors later privately conceded Sanger's successful quest for publicity was a main reason they dropped the case in February 1916.³³ Sanger introduced a new form of direct action when she opened the nation's first birth-control clinic in Brooklyn on October 16, 1916.

That year, birth control burgeoned into a radical social movement. Goldman entered the fray in February when New York police arrested her for speaking openly of contraception. Her April trial snowballed into an early media circus attended by hundreds. She served fifteen days in jail instead of paying the \$100 fine. A special *Mother Earth* "Birth Control Number" in April 1916 addressed the issue's scientific, historical, social, and economic aspects.³⁴ The defendant/publisher urged readers to write letters, conduct meetings, and lobby newspapers. She wrote, "Nothing else has such power as publicity."³⁵ Goldman's contention that *Mother Earth* played a key role in her case highlights a key function of the dissident press: "I have no other medium of communication with the public," she averred, because of "the conspiracy of silence which has so far been observed by the conservative and even the so-called radical press." Other anarchists criticized Goldman for paying too much attention to a "very small phase in a much larger social setting; namely the freedom of expression in life, labor and art." She defended herself on the grounds that birth control was instrumental to attaining those larger ideals.³⁶ The *Masses* shared this broader view, speculating that opponents feared contraception would make women "free and self-dependent individuals."³⁷ The feminist-friendly *Call* named birth control "the most revolutionary doctrine yet preached by brave men and women to a headstrong world."³⁸

The birth-control movement was inextricably tied to the free-speech movement, another irresistible draw for radicals. Besides supporting Goldman and Sanger, the *Masses* called upon readers to attend the less-celebrated trial of social feminist lawyers Ashley and Ida Rauh (Eastman's wife) for distributing contraceptive information.³⁹ Sanger was arrested at least eight times for talking about contraception. The fledgling Free Speech League, precursor to the

American Civil Liberties Union, took up her cause.⁴⁰ At about the same time, the Post Office ruled a *Blast* issue unmailable because it supported Goldman in her obscenity trial. Another taboo article praised the “direct action” of women who attended the trial of a young man charged with distributing birth control information. The third, headlined “The Press Harlot,” offended with its claim that mainstream media portrayals of anarchists caused “brain syphilis.”⁴¹ Berkman eked revenge with the April 15 cover cartoon, *His Bloodhounds*, which depicted “capitalism” siccing on the *Blast* dogs labeled “Church, Courts, The Press, and Post Office.”

By 1917, the *Masses* declared the movement an “illegal success.” Birth-control information was distributed practically everywhere, although illegal in nearly every state. *Family Limitation* flew about the country by the tens of thousands, more than twenty Birth Control Leagues operated, and the medical associations were reconsidering their stance on birth-control laws.⁴² Postal officials conceded the popular press was devoting a “great deal of space” on the topic as they debated whether to prosecute Sanger for opening her clinic.⁴³

Reframing Prostitution as a Class Issue

Goldman led the radical-press critique of sexual relations in other areas. She opposed marriage as an intrusion upon individuals by church and state and argued the nuclear family oppressed individuals.⁴⁴ One of Goldman’s most significant cultural contributions was her popularization of the Marxist linkage between economics and sex, as presented in her lecture, “The White Slave Traffic,” which the post office deemed unmailable when *Mother Earth* published it in January 1910.⁴⁵ Sex discrimination forced women into prostitution, she argued, since it truncated women’s education and employment options.⁴⁶ Goldman drew her analysis from a pair of nineteenth-century seminal works of Marxist feminism. August Bebel’s *Woman and Socialism* (1879) and Friedrich Engels’s *The Origins of the Family* (1884) framed female subjugation as a class issue and traced the source of female oppression to the modern family under capitalism. The Marxist reframing of prostitution as a class issue retrained responsibility for prostitution from individual immorality to a function of industrial capitalism. Robert Minor’s 1917 *Blast* cover, *The Vice Clean-Up*, for instance, clearly sympathizes with the diminutive streetwalker collared by his trademark behemoth cop.⁴⁷ As the caption below an *IW* cartoon pairing a hobo and a prostitute read, “He can’t afford to have a home. She never had a chance.

That's why they are selling themselves to the highest bidder."⁴⁸

IW was more tolerant of exchanging sex for money than were the prudish socialist journals, which reflected its largely single, male, transient audience. "The prostitute is a physical necessity to the 'blanket stiff' and the 'blanket stiff' a financial necessity to a large portion of the prostitutes," it stated.⁴⁹ Aileen Kraditor notes that such articles did not appear in the *IWW*'s eastern *Solidarity*, whose readers were mainly family men.⁵⁰ *IW* also reprinted a *St. Louis Mirror* article that referred to prostitution as the "social good" instead of the "social evil."⁵¹ In contrast, the female-oriented *Progressive Woman* headlined one story "The Cruellest Slavery of Modern Times." It traced a global brothel network jarringly similar to twenty-first-century sex trafficking.⁵² The radical press was as obsessed as the popular press with the lurid nature of "white slavery," the subject of at least *PW* three special numbers.⁵³ The socialist *PW* clearly viewed prostitution as big business, and it repeated Engels's claim that socialism would resolve the problem by removing profit from prostitution.⁵⁴

Feminist author and socialist Charlotte Perkins Gilman first popularized Engels's ideas among Americans. Marxist thought reverberated throughout her influential 1898 historical account of women's evolution toward emancipation, *Women and Economics*. Like Engels and Bebel, however, the future publisher and editor of the socialist *Forerunner* was unable to break free of the age-old "separate spheres" philosophy, which dichotomized society into the male public sphere and female domestic sphere. Gilman argued that restricting women to the domestic sphere oppressed them, but in her writings she continued to delegate home and childcare to women. Despite Gilman's assumption that motherhood was an inherent female trait, she described at great lengths how its every aspect demanded training and professionalization. These contradictions in Gilman's otherwise radical work illustrate the strict cultural constraints upon reimagining women's role.

By combining European socialist feminist thought and the Darwinian ideas of Gilman's *Women and Economics*, May Wood Simons's 1899 *Woman and the Social Problem* became the "closest thing to a theoretical tract on feminism and its relation to socialism" the party produced, according to her biographers Gretchen and Kent Kreuter.⁵⁵ In the first American socialist publication on gender issues, which also inaugurated the Kerr Company's Pocket Library of Socialism, she concluded women suffered more under capitalism than did men because the system destroyed the home. Kerr's wife, May Walden Kerr, expanded upon women's issues in her pamphlet *Socialism and the Home*, which

blamed virtually all social woes on capitalism.⁵⁶ The home remained the dominant theme in social feminist discourse in the women's columns that began appearing in the socialist press at the turn of the century.

Debating Women's Role in Women's Columns

The first women's column in a socialist newspaper blamed women for their own oppression. Lydia Kingsmill Commander, a resident of the radical Ruskin cooperative community, authored *Coming Nation's* "Woman's Department," which debuted on October 22, 1898. "Woman has been a slave, and is scarcely anywhere free today, but she has not been without blame," she wrote. "Those who WILL NOT yield to tyranny DO NOT."⁵⁷ Kate Richards O'Hare succeeded her in the journal published by Julius Wayland. Her column, beginning in 1902, marked the first time "an independent woman controlled her own column" in a general-circulation socialist periodical, according to historian Elliott Shore.⁵⁸ The moderate socialist offered readers such tame advice as feigning interest when their husbands discussed socialism. "The glow of happiness on your husband's face will more than repay you," O'Hare advised.⁵⁹ Wayland's *Appeal to Reason* also launched a woman's column in 1902, Josephine Conger's "Hints to the *Appeal's* Wise Women." A dull roundup of socialist women's meetings sweetened by saccharine poetry, Conger's columns nonetheless were a harbinger of the debates on women's role in socialism that soon would ricochet across the socialist press.⁶⁰ The weekly *Los Angeles Socialist* also published a woman's column from at least 1902 through 1904. In *Wilshire's*, "Godiva" launched a woman's column in October 1904 that attributed women's subjugation to their "dull placidity."⁶¹ Godiva soon rode off into the sunset, but *Wilshire's* regularly challenged gender roles.⁶²

The socialist woman's agenda that Conger set forth in the January 14, 1905, *Appeal to Reason's* special woman's number shows how difficult it was even for radical thinkers to conceive of women outside the home. Conger claimed socialism would provide women time to regain their intelligence and vigor, but the greatest end to which she could imagine this reinvigorated woman applying her energy was to become a pleasanter spouse and livelier mother.⁶³ Her vision of homemaking as the creation of "a true haven of rest, a temple of beauty, of love and mutual development for the private family" paradoxically mirrored the oppressively genteel creed of the idealized Victorian middle-class "true woman,"

who selflessly devoted herself to her family's needs in the domestic sphere.⁶⁴ Conger envisioned technology that eliminated housework but could not imagine women performing any other meaningful work. When women in *Looking Backward's* socialist utopia became mothers, in fact, they withdrew from the "industrial army" to the home.⁶⁵ The era's faith in science and Darwinism legitimized dichotomized gender stereotypes, which further limited socialists' reenvisioning of gender roles.⁶⁶

Progressive Woman Provides a Voice for Socialist Women

In June 1907, Conger-Kaneko expanded the gender debates when she launched *Socialist Woman*, the only magazine of its kind. Her new hyphenated last name reflected her modern attitude toward her recent marriage to Kiichi Kaneko, a prominent Japanese socialist and labor reporter, who co-published with her the eight-page monthly until his death in 1909.⁶⁷ Socialist thinkers she cited to back up her claim of a "sex war" included Bebel, Engels, John Stuart Mill, Charles Darwin, and contemporary social Darwinist Herbert Spencer.⁶⁸ The native Missourian learned the printing trade from her brother, a newspaper publisher, and acquired her socialist views during two years at the experimental cooperative Ruskin College in Missouri. She held high hopes for women under socialism: "It will insure a livelihood, [sic] short hours, good pay to men and women alike. It will keep children out of the factories and sweatshops, and will build schools and playgrounds for them. It will have none but sanitary homes and workshops. The mother of young children will not be forced to leave them in order to help eke out the family income in the factory."⁶⁹ The weekly followed the growth of women's socialist clubs, covered socialist women's activities, and profiled socialist women.⁷⁰ Abundant fiction and poetry followed the model of May Beals's "A Tale of 'Trash,'" about a poor girl sentenced to twenty years in prison because she stole money for her mother's medicine.⁷¹ Contributors to Conger-Kaneko's journal, in 1909 renamed *Progressive Woman* to broaden its appeal, included leading socialist women such as Gilman; Walden; Simons; Lida Parce Robinson; Theresa Malkiel; O'Hare; and Meta Stern, associate editor of the German socialist *New Yorker Volkszeitung* and a *Call* columnist, under the pseudonym "Hebe."

Scholar Debra Japp concludes that *Progressive Woman* fostered a sense of identity and community among socialist women usually ignored or trivialized by

the party.⁷² Circulation inched to nearly three thousand by June 1908, when Conger-Kaneko moved to Girard, Kansas, to publish on the *Appeal* press. Its circulation briefly crested at fifteen thousand in 1910.⁷³ Historian Kathleen Endres observes, “Almost everything in the magazine gave the female reader a sense of worth.”⁷⁴ Conger-Kaneko’s journal epitomized how the sisterhood and self-confidence that Mary Jo Buhle argues Gilded Age women gained in female institutions in their protective sex-segregated sphere empowered their socialist successors to forge a “distinctive presence” in prewar America. According to Buhle, they “enlarged the concept of womanhood to its ultimate political limits.”⁷⁵

A unifying belief among these pioneering public women was that female equality was inextricably bound to the socialist mission of obliterating social stratification. “Socialism is feminism,” asserted Lida Parce Robinson, former president of the Arizona Equal Suffrage Association.⁷⁶ She equated capitalism with male aggression and the coming commonwealth with female cooperation.⁷⁷ Mark Pittenger argues that she was “genuinely radical” in her theory that socialism would integrate male and female traits.⁷⁸ Her characterization of marriage as a “fraudulent contract” that kept women in subjection put Parce at the far left of the moderate socialist journals in which she published.⁷⁹ Robinson, who also published under her maiden name, also rejected the socialist vision of female liberation that returned women to the domestic sphere. She came closer to embracing modern feminism in her statement, “What women want, and will have, is free scope for the exercise of their faculties.”⁸⁰

In both its women’s columns and general contents, the socialist press stimulated this national conversation on gender issues. The *Chicago Daily Socialist* was among newspapers that converted their women’s pages’ fare from food and fashion to political discourse. Historian Sherry Katz discovered women’s sections in Californian radical newspapers followed the lead of social feminists writing not only in *Progressive Woman* but also in socialism’s nationally circulated journals, *ISR*, *Wilshire’s*, the *Call*, and the *Masses*. “Socialist-feminists clearly used these publications to share their experiences in different parts of the state and to knit together local groups of radical women into a statewide network of socialist women’s clubs,” she observes.⁸¹ The socialist press provided women with a group identity and sense of community even when the formal party failed to do so. It also offered information and education that eventually enabled women to collectively challenge their secondary status in the party.

Socialist women's print culture was radical in its attempts to articulate the intertwined oppressions of class and gender that would not germinate as feminist theories until decades later.⁸² (Prewar feminists remained largely oblivious to the significance of racial oppression.) Stern used the second-wave feminists' term "double burden" in *Socialist Woman* as early as 1908: "As surely as there is a class struggle, there is also a sex struggle; and the working woman has a double burden to bear—the burden of her class and the burden of her sex; that she is doubly exploited—as a worker and as a woman."⁸³ Ironically, the conservative domestic scenarios conjured by moderate socialists to counter mainstream claims that socialism would destroy the family reinforced restrictive female stereotypes. "Under socialism the home would be more attractive than the saloon, the wife, relieved of her grievous burdens, would be better company than the bar keeper," wrote an *ISR* contributor."⁸⁴ As if to convince readers, a 1913 *PW* headline enthused, "Motherhood Is Science! It Is Art!"⁸⁵ With the exception of illustrations in the *Masses*, socialist press cartoons idealized women in their traditional domestic role. Unlike its denigrating portrayals of African Americans, however, the only women the radical press ridiculed were upper class.⁸⁶

The debut installment of the *Call*'s women's department in the daily's May 31, 1908, issue gave little hint it would emerge as a leading forum for challenging sexism. It featured a sewing pattern, an insipid "Smile Society," and an illustration of a buxom woman wearing an apron and peeling potatoes. That it shared its page with the children's section reinforced women's traditional place in the home. "Conductor" Rose Pastor Stokes's role appeared minimal. Within weeks, however, the uneven department at least intermingled such traditional bromides as "Don't send a man away in the morning with a memory of curling pins and wrapper and an unwashed kiss" with critiques of sex discrimination in the Socialist Party.⁸⁷ On one day, Malkiel could charge that capitalism deprived woman of "her God-allotted position as mother and wife," and on another lambast female domesticity: "Woman is frail because the white man's world chooses to keep her so. It coddles her with compliments but does not allow her to enter the sphere of its fullest activity."⁸⁸ She heralded the "Russian revolutionary woman" soldier as the embodiment of female emancipation because "she has completely thrown off all conventional restrictions in her daily intercourse."⁸⁹



The Dog and the Child, Call, April 15, 1909.

Stuck incongruously among such radical pronouncements was advice from “Kate Housekeeper,” complete with a Boston brown beans recipe, who lauded the “wiser, contented though poorer” mother who chose to stay home with her children, a seeming contradiction to the lives of the *Call*’s purported working-class audience.⁹⁰ The publication’s admiration for the professional New Woman likewise indicated a gulf between educated socialist journalists and working-class women.⁹¹ Sara Kingsbury’s declaration that work, no matter how awful, was women’s “first step to freedom” indicated a glaring unfamiliarity with the factory floor.⁹² It published at least two “Anti-Drudge” numbers that seemed targeted at bourgeois women. “The work of the household is such that it hinders intellectual growth, destroys the health of women, leaving them nervous and unsatisfied,” Simons wrote.⁹³

Radical Proposals to Liberate Women

One proposed solution was to reshape homemaking with a business model, although this contradicted the claim housework was for dullards. Robinson argued that homes should be organized by professionals, “not by a pitiful jack-of-all-trades whose faculties are so scattered, and so beset, that she can do nothing in the best way.”⁹⁴ Simons evoked a middle-class household in her suggestion that bored mothers obtain part-time work and use nannies, restaurants, and male “houseworkers” to take up the domestic slack.⁹⁵ As Fishbein notes, such “aristocratic” arrangements were beyond reach of working-class women.⁹⁶ In contrast, Gilman’s pioneering call in 1898 for cooperative housing with a central kitchen hewed closer to the envisioned cooperative commonwealth. By 1912, Ada May Kreckler was proposing in *Mother Earth* that children be raised in baby hospitals and nurseries because women often are “unfitted by nature” for motherhood, a rare affront to cultural dogma about maternal instinct.⁹⁷ In the June 1910 issue of *ISR*, Georgia Kotsch took an unusual swat at motherhood that reflected shifting attitudes: “That baby which you call yours is not wholly yours. She has individual rights and society has a claim upon her. Henceforth you must employ time hitherto given to her in some other way.”⁹⁸ Perhaps the most radical insight into the domestic sphere’s inequity was Maud Thompson’s 1909 *ISR* essay on the essential role women’s unpaid and devalued housekeeping played in capitalism.⁹⁹

The *Masses* most consistently endorsed the broader prewar feminist agenda summed up by historian Christine Stansell as “economic independence, sexual freedom, and psychological exemption from the repressive obligations of wifehood, motherhood, and daughterhood—a jettisoning of family duties for a heightened female individualism.”¹⁰⁰ Artist Kenneth Chamberlain captured the dilemma in *Canned Innocence*, which depicted women trapped in a jam jar labeled “The Home.”¹⁰¹ Eastman, who risked ridicule by marching in suffrage parades, and associate editor Floyd Dell embraced the sexual revolution.¹⁰² To signal her rejection of traditional marriage, Eastman’s wife, Ida Rauh, kept her own name.¹⁰³ The journal romanticized single motherhood—“free motherhood”—as part of its free-love advocacy.¹⁰⁴ Men like Eastman and Dell relished the idea of savoring the world with female partners, but that view also relegated women to an auxiliary role. Jeannette Eaton unconsciously exposed the *Masses*’s male perspective when she asked readers, “Which kind of woman would you rather have pour out your morning coffee for you—a complacent or

an eager woman?”¹⁰⁵ As Fishbein notes, the *Masses*’s feminism was complex. Its men tended to idealize women as maternal muses. John Sloan’s series of a pint-sized Adam under the tutelage of a gargantuan Eve even hints at a fear of women. “Beyond the surprisingly strong male feminism of *The Masses* radicals one senses a lingering suspicion of male sexual inadequacy akin to the Oedipal model,” Fishbein observes.¹⁰⁶

Socialist Women’s Separatist Strategy

The Socialist Party of America was complacent at best about women, even though its founding platform officially favored sexual equality. Only 8 women were among 128 elected delegates to the 1901 unity convention, a number that stayed the same at the 1904 convention. “Nowhere was the party more bourgeois than in its relationship to the Woman Question and in the interrelationship of women and the party,” wrote Gretchen and Kent Kreuter.¹⁰⁷ Historian Ira Kipnis cites the party’s “male superiority complex.”¹⁰⁸ Neil Basen claims party leaders, particularly Morris Hillquit and Victor Berger, “belittled and mistreated” O’Hare.¹⁰⁹ Kraditor labels the Socialist Party the most discriminatory radical organization.¹¹⁰ Although women comprised about 10 percent of party membership, they endured a secondary status that relegated them to auxiliary tasks and much behind-the-scenes work. *Socialist Woman* complained locals found women “useful only to make cakes for tea-parties and ‘fancy things’ to sell at fairs for raising funds.”¹¹¹

The sex-segregated socialist clubs women began forming in the early 1900s expanded on contemporary ideals of womanhood to carve an “active role for themselves in the social order.”¹¹² The Woman’s National Progressive League (WNPL) is an example; it also underscores the symbiotic relationship between the women’s pages in the socialist press and the socialist women’s movement. Early in 1907, Mary Wilshire appealed to classic female virtues in her call for socialist women to organize. “You with me are the world-mother, whatever the feeblest and most unfortunate child in the world, it is mine and yours to suffer with it,” she addressed women through her husband’s magazine.¹¹³ An April “woman’s number” elaborated on plans for a national organization. Other articles referenced gender tensions in the party. Simons urged women to join the party, for instance, while Gertrude Breslau Hunt pressed locals to welcome women.¹¹⁴

The league elected Mary Wilshire president at its founding meeting of thirty-two women on April 27, named *Wilshire's* its official organ, and set up headquarters in the magazine's William Street office.¹¹⁵ The pro-suffrage league barely could be labeled radical, as it even avoided "socialist" in the title, to avoid scaring off potential members, and its president signed herself "Mrs. Gaylord Wilshire." WNPL member "Mrs. Upton Sinclair" devised a monthly study course for potential socialist women on the home and food.¹¹⁶ Despite enrolling three thousand members by September, however, the WNPL was short-lived.¹¹⁷ Mary, a new mother, dropped all league work in spring 1908. Her absence left a critical communications void in the league's official organ. Although *Wilshire's* resumed publishing WNPL news in the fall, few plans materialized.¹¹⁸ Mary claimed WNPL branches in sixteen states and individual members in eighteen more at the end of 1909, shortly before she and Gaylord moved to England.¹¹⁹ The WNPL and *Wilshire's* "Our Woman's Department" dissolved within months.¹²⁰

Conger-Kaneko also advocated a separatist socialist women's movement to empower potential party recruits.¹²¹ She conceived women-only clubs as "a sort of preparatory school" to nurture women's public selves. Centuries of subjugation had made women meek in men's presence, she observed, and many male socialists resented women's presence at meetings. "In the separate organization the most unsophisticated little woman may soon learn to preside over a meeting, to make motions, and to defend her stand with a 'little speech,'" she explained. "After a year or two of this sort of practice she is ready to work with the men."¹²² The *Call*, an equally vocal advocate of separatism for socialist women, was instrumental in organizing the first New York Socialist Women's Conference, chaired by Malkiel and held on July 4–5, 1908.¹²³ As fall election campaign events catered to male voters, the *Call* reported, the society planned special lectures by women for the party's overlooked, voteless female members.¹²⁴ During a six-hour debate on whether to create a separate women's organization, older women, "tired of their positions as official cake-bakers," favored the sex-segregated "preparatory school" model, while the younger generation, emboldened by the suffrage movement, trusted women could work as equals with men. The separatists, including *Call* journalists Stern and Block, prevailed, but the concurrent state party convention rejected their proposal to create a women's educational organization. The rebuke underscored women's lack of power in the party.¹²⁵ Separatist sentiment simmered.

The Woman Suffrage Movement in the Radical Press

It probably is no coincidence that 1908 not only ushered in a new era of socialist women's activism but also was a breakout year for American suffragists after two decades of slumber.¹²⁶ In conjunction with "Woman's Day" on February 27, when socialist women staged protests for both woman suffrage and socialism, *Socialist Woman* and the *Call* produced suffrage numbers. The *Call* also showed inklings of the rekindling suffrage movement. Stories appeared about the International Woman's Suffrage Alliance meeting in Amsterdam, and librarian Maud Malone announced formation of the East Side Women's Equal Suffrage League.¹²⁷ Suffrage quickly began to dominate the *Call*'s women's department after Block took over as editor in 1909 and it migrated to the ambitious new Sunday magazine as "Woman's Sphere." It expanded to two pages by the end of 1915. Block published pro-suffrage articles by well-known suffragists and socialists including Stern, Stokes, Olive Schreiner, Anna Maley, Lena Morrow Lewis, Ida Crouch-Hazlett, and Harriot Stanton Blatch.¹²⁸

The *Call* kept readers apprised of British militant suffragettes, who since 1905 had introduced unladylike public spectacles that ranged from kaleidoscopic parades, to chaining themselves to Parliament gates, to setting afire empty buildings.¹²⁹ The unbending Brits' willingness to endure imprisonment, hunger strikes, and forced feedings delighted radical journalists as much as it appalled mainstream media. "Bravo!" cried IWW's *Solidarity*, which extolled the suffragettes' direct action, despite its distaste for politics.¹³⁰ "And with what ingenuity and effect the suffragettes have employed this method!" chimed in anarchist Hippolyte Havel in anti-government *Mother Earth*.¹³¹

Wilshire's declared the suffragettes' cause worth a prison sentence.¹³² Visiting suffragette Bettina Boormann Wells not only shared her adventures in civil disobedience with radical and suffrage journal readers but also helped lead American women's first suffrage parade.¹³³ *Call* columnist Stern applauded the outburst of other new public suffrage techniques Americans had recently adopted from suffragettes. Blatch, recently returned from London, led the way with an unprecedented soapboxing trolley tour across upstate New York. Suffrage soapboxers engaged crowds on practically every street corner of New York City. "The American woman's suffrage movement has ceased to consist of parlor meetings and pink tea parties and has become truly a progressive and militant movement," Stern rejoiced.¹³⁴ Political-action journals such as *Wilshire*'s, the *Rip-Saw*, and the *Milwaukee Leader* also supported votes for women. Before the failed 1912 Wisconsin suffrage referendum, the latter's pages

bulged with pro-suffrage articles. It also editorialized for passage of a constitutional amendment to grant all American women the vote in one fell swoop. In contrast, suffrage found little favor in the left-wing *ISR*.

Women socialists who wanted the vote struggled to reconcile competing allegiances. “The issue of woman suffrage was at the very center—was the virtual expression—of the balance socialist women struck between the nonsocialist women’s movement and the male-dominated socialist Left,” according to historian Ellen DuBois.¹³⁵ Social feminists in the politically active Milwaukee and New York locals felt split: suffragists disliked their radicalism, socialists their feminism.¹³⁶ The *Call* actively campaigned against socialists collaborating with upper-class suffragists such as Blatch. Malkiel termed it absurd for working-class suffragists to join with their class enemy.¹³⁷ Conger-Kaneko championed cross-class collaboration because she believed ballots would give workingwomen a tool to fight for better wages.¹³⁸ She, however, opened her journal to opposing views. “There can be no compromises with organizations of capitalist women,” pro-suffrage Simons wrote in *Socialist Woman*, because class trumped gender.¹³⁹ Its successor, *Progressive Women*, published debates between Malkiel and Abigail Scott Duniway, president of the Oregon State Equal Suffrage Association.¹⁴⁰ Parce’s series on “Woman’s Place in Politics” ran throughout 1912, and *PW* kept readers apprised of the various state campaigns.¹⁴¹ Suffrage news spilled beyond the *Call*’s “Woman’s Sphere.” It was a rare day after 1909 that suffrage did not make its regular news columns, often on page one. A 1912 editorial urged readers to march in the suffrage parade wearing red sashes or buttons to show that “Socialists are leaders in the fight for equal suffrage.”¹⁴²

Coverage of Working Women’s Issues

As a labor newspaper, the *Call* covered women’s strikes and related labor issues. A 1914 story on state hearings on female wages, for example, shed light on life on \$6 a week. “I sleep three in a bed with the landlady’s children,” one woman testified. “I never spend more than 20 cents for dinner. Gee, I don’t even get to a moving picture show, without lying awake nights planning how to make up the nickel.”¹⁴³ As discussed in [chapter 2](#), the *Call* threw all its resources behind the 1910 shirtwaist strike. Women’s Trade Union League conventions were front-page news.¹⁴⁴ Editorials supported Illinois and Oregon laws limiting women’s

workdays to ten hours.¹⁴⁵ Stories like one about a dozen women arrested in Pennsylvania for serenading mine strikebreakers with pots and kettles highlighted women's participation in the labor movement.¹⁴⁶

Although the *Call* led the pack, other socialist journals also covered women's labor issues. An *ISR* reporter's late-night visit to an immigrant tenement apartment in January 1911 humanized the sweatshop debate. A mother and her two teen daughters worked at a table while four younger children, who had finished their work, slept on the floor. "Me and the girls, wit de odder chilen, before dey go to sleep make \$1.35 a day, when we work hard."¹⁴⁷ *ISR* photographs documented women's participation in labor battles, including strikers in Lawrence in 1912, Colorado strikers' wives parading in 1914, and women pickets in New York in 1915.¹⁴⁸

PW covered relatively little about factory women, although it supported organizing.¹⁴⁹ In 1912 it briefly published a department on women's trade unions by International Ladies Garment Workers Union organizer Pauline Newman. Conger-Kaneko focused more on the "horrible crime of child labor," because it related to women's traditional domestic role.¹⁵⁰ Malkiel wrote melodramatically of homeless children, "Awake ye mothers of the race.... You slumber while your children are being sacrificed on the altar of greed."¹⁵¹ Later, *PW* reported a pioneering campaign against sexual harassment by women at the Kalamazoo Corset Company. When the firm fired a dozen women union members who had protested supervisors' pressure on workers for sexual favors, four hundred women struck and picketed.¹⁵² A relatively new breed of working woman, the "shop girl," or retail clerk, in the new urban wonder, the department store, drew a rebuke from party women's organizer Maley for her failure to organize. "So we tell you your self-effacement is not beautiful," she scolded the clerks. "It is hideous."¹⁵³ Socialist women writers sometimes seemed exasperated by working-class women, chiding them in a manner counterproductive to converting them. Crouch-Hazlett, for example, used the *Call* to criticize workingwomen's "lack of class consciousness." Her use of the third-person indicates the gap separating the journalists from unskilled workers. "They go into work outside the home as into a matrimonial waiting room," she wrote, "where they expect to catch a prise [*sic*] and climb out of the working class."¹⁵⁴

The Woman's National Committee: Ladies Auxiliary or Engine of

Change?

The Socialist Party exuded more charm than Crouch-Hazlett when it belatedly began to court women, in response to the growing female separatist sentiment. In 1908, to head off creation of an independent women's organization, that year's convention appointed a five-member Woman's National Committee (WNC) to take charge of propaganda for women and hire a full-time organizer, Maley. Three members were frequent radical-press commentators on women and socialism: Stern, Malkiel, and Simons, its chair. By publishing information about the committee's work, socialist journals served as a prime means of communication. In *PW*, Simons explained the committee's purpose was to enlist women socialists, advocate suffrage work by locals, and improve socialist Sunday schools.¹⁵⁵ The party added a woman suffrage plank, and Debs also wooed women socialists in his presidential campaign.¹⁵⁶ Separatist *Call* justly worried the woman's committee reduced women to a "mere auxiliary" of the party instead of "active participants."¹⁵⁷

Conger-Kaneko eyed the new committee as the savior of her cash-strapped weekly. She envisioned the *PW* becoming the WNC's official magazine under her editorship, just as the German socialist women's association published *Die Gleichheit* (Equality) edited by suffrage leader Clara Zetkin.¹⁵⁸ A special "Organization" issue urged state and local secretaries to order large *PW* bundles for future recruits. Simons outlined recruiting strategies in *PW*: Schedule entertainment and invite as many women as you can, including teachers, clerks, trade union women, wives of socialists. Get addresses, visit soon, hand them socialist literature, and invite them to socialist meetings. Through radical periodicals, the committee also distributed special monthly women's programs featuring songs and socialist readings.¹⁵⁹ The WNC kept a tight rein on these women organizers, who were to "keep in the closest touch" with party officials.¹⁶⁰ Simons stated its purpose was "not to build up a separatist organization but to educate and bring women to the party."¹⁶¹

Gender relations progressed to the point where new committee member Malkiel announced in the *Call* that the 1910 national convention in Chicago received women "as good, able representatives of the fighting proletariat."¹⁶² The daily praised the appointment of three women to the 1910 Copenhagen Congress as a big step from the party's "old bourgeois contempt for women."¹⁶³ Scores of women worked as effective editors of women's departments of socialist newspapers, Simons noted in 1911.¹⁶⁴ That same year, thirty-five locals'

women's committees held 850 meetings and raised nearly \$10,000.¹⁶⁵ By 1912, one member of the National Executive Committee, two members of the national committee, and one international secretary were women, while fourteen states had female state correspondents. Conger-Kaneko's May 1912 convention number contrasted Socialist women's equal standing with that of women in the Democrat and Republican parties fighting for a suffrage plank. "How these women must enjoy the sensation of being treated like irresponsible children pleading for a toy they would not know how to use!" she wrote.¹⁶⁶

Print culture played an instrumental in recruiting socialist women over the next year, when female membership increased from 10 to 15 percent of the party total. The woman's committee sold more than 1.5 million copies of four-page leaflets on some twenty topics related to women, and the party press office distributed its suffrage articles to some three hundred periodicals estimated to reach 3 million readers. Many radical papers published special suffrage editions, and at least half of socialist newspapers in the last week of February 1913 devoted their contents to suffrage or related women's issues, reported in *PW*.¹⁶⁷ Nonetheless, when a 1914 *Call* column asserted, "Without the women we shall get nowhere," it asked what women were doing for the movement instead of what the movement was doing for women.¹⁶⁸

All was not well for socialist women or *Progressive Woman*. When *Appeal to Reason* management stopped publishing her newspaper in 1911, the widowed Conger-Kaneko was forced back to Chicago. The 1912 party convention declined her request to make *PW* the WNC's official journal. Instead, it allowed the woman's committee to help Conger-Kaneko promote and distribute *PW*. But when Conger-Kaneko moved her journal to party headquarters in Chicago, she lost editorial control. The appointment of antifeminist Winnie Branstetter as head of the WNC spelled the journal's end. The WNC withdrew funding in July 1913. Party membership had begun its decline, and the next year the war in Europe diverted socialist energies. Conger-Kaneko's November 1913 attempt to revive a revised, gender-neutral version of the periodical under the name of the recently defunct *Coming Nation* was short-lived. Branstetter charged that *Coming Nation* editor Barnet Braverman had ties to the IWW and dropped it from the WNC literature list. Buhle characterizes that crippling move as the "closest approximation to personal expulsion from the party that a privately owned Socialist magazine could receive."¹⁶⁹ The last issue appeared July 1914.

Socialist women lost their political voice. Simons was among many women who quit the party.¹⁷⁰ For feminist news many women turned to the growing suffragist newspapers, such as the single-issue *Suffragist* published by Alice

Paul's militant National Woman's Party or the broader, more conservative *Woman's Journal* published by the National American Woman Suffrage Association. May Walden later reported that Conger-Kaneko remarried, divorced, and ran a boarding house during the Chicago World's Fair before she died of cancer in 1914.¹⁷¹ The party disbanded its woman's committee in 1915, evidence that the presence of vibrant social movement media was no guarantee of success.

Women's Issues in IWW Newspapers

The male-dominated IWW journals also grappled with women's role in the social revolution, even though the organization officially offered women equal opportunity. Italian anarchist women in Paterson, in fact, formed one of the IWW's first locals, and women were on the front lines of the Lawrence strike. In the IWW's early years, however, its journals routinely promised the revolution would let women return to the home, doubtless an attractive alternative for many a factory worker. Yet, in 1910 an anonymous woman complained to *Solidarity* she would not exchange one kind of servitude for another.¹⁷² Flynn, the antithesis of the meek true woman, concurred that housework dulled women's "mental horizon."¹⁷³ The IWW also was ambivalent about family. Its journal occasionally dangled domestic life as a carrot before male transient workers. An editorial asked, "Do you LIKE to be crummy and filthy and hungry ... and homeless and wifeless and childless and brutalized from living like a beast of burden?"¹⁷⁴ The revolution, *IW* averred, would resolve this contradiction. At the same time, even though it once stated that "Marriage and a family life is the natural state of man," it claimed single men made better revolutionaries: "These young and unmarried men have within them the spirit of unionism."¹⁷⁵ More than one Wobbly called his wife the "ball and chain."¹⁷⁶ Flynn's journalism provided an important counter to such casual sexism. For example, she charged that impoverished women had no choice to survive than to be "sex slaves" in marriage."¹⁷⁷ A 1909 *IW* editorial agreed, "The more intelligent and pure the woman, the more her mind revolts from the thought of marriage as an economic necessity—a means of getting a supporter, a living."¹⁷⁸

Virtually all western miners and migrant workers were men, but most workers in IWW factory strikes in the urban East were women. An *IW* special section on the Lawrence strike included a tribute to women's conspicuous contributions and sacrifices. As pickets, "Many were their acts of daring; many

the quick-witted strategems by which they outwitted the forces of the opposition.”¹⁷⁹ Flynn played a key role in organizing these downtrodden workers, whom she lifted with her soaring oratory and example of female leadership.¹⁸⁰ She urged the male-oriented IWW to make special efforts to recruit women. *Solidarity* published a special women’s edition in 1916.¹⁸¹ Besides eastern textile workers, the IWW organized female domestic workers in Denver, button workers in Iowa, and telephone workers from Indiana to Seattle.¹⁸² *IW* even lambasted a telephone company advertisement for seeking only pretty girls.¹⁸³ The IWW’s vaunted solidarity extended to women: “It’s hell when a man will scab a woman to death,” *IW* stated.¹⁸⁴ Male fellow workers extended their solidarity to the many women strikers organized by the IWW. In turn, women picketed in at least one lumberjacks’ strike.¹⁸⁵ They also offered crucial support to striking husbands by skimping at home and protesting in public; wives who were not on board could quickly kill direct action. Women rarely appeared in IWW illustrations, but a 1918 *IW* cartoon portrays both a man and woman greeting a “One Big Union” sun rising behind factories in the horizon.¹⁸⁶

Wobblies’ broadening view of women’s role can be seen by comparing Flynn’s 1911 assurance to *IW* readers that “the union factory girl of today is the helpful and encouraging wife of the union man of tomorrow” to a female contributor’s 1916 appeal to “Rebel Girls” to join the IWW.¹⁸⁷ The title of Joe Hill’s song empowered women Wobblies, even though its lyrics relegated her to a supportive role at her man’s side. In her account of a female tobacco worker’s strike, for example, a *Solidarity* contributor identified herself as “A Rebel Girl.”¹⁸⁸ Flynn blamed unwelcoming locals and oppressive husbands for blocking more women from joining the IWW.¹⁸⁹ The organization’s collapse of all gender inequity into economic determinism, however, also undermined its appeal to women.¹⁹⁰

The IWW’s opposition to suffrage impeded recruitment. The organization deemed votes for women irrelevant to class struggle, and *IW* dismissed “female members of the petty bourgeois fraternity” who wanted the vote: “What we want is shorter hours, more wages and better conditions,” it editorialized.¹⁹¹ Despite Flynn’s championing of female workers, she subscribed to the IWW view that opposed any organization of women based on the premise that gender bonded women.¹⁹² “The sisterhood of women, like the brotherhood of man, is a hollow sham to labor,” Flynn wrote. “Behind all its smug hypocrisy and sickly sentimentality loom the sinister outlines of the class war.”¹⁹³ Wobblies viewed

the suffrage movement as a threat to the battle for industrial unionism.

The suffrage movement's harshest critic was *Mother Earth*. Despite Goldman's role as muse to the sexual revolution, her magazine often pursued an antifeminist agenda.¹⁹⁴ Berkman once claimed society was "rapidly becoming impotent through the efforts of inattractive [*sic*] suffragists and feminists."¹⁹⁵ He was one of the few New Yorkers unmoved by the decade's spectacular suffrage parades, disdaining the "forty thousand or forty million who troop up Fifth Avenue like a huge flock of sheep after the banner of a dead idea."¹⁹⁶ Anarchist aversion toward government or business offered women few avenues for moving beyond the domestic sphere. Mystical ideals about sexuality blinded *Mother Earth*'s otherwise radical publisher and editor from envisioning women in any role other than as mothers or the sex partners of men. Ironically, both roles tied women's identity to others, the antithesis of the anarchist cry for personal autonomy. *Mother Earth*'s dogma offered no strategy for women to achieve the economic independence that its contributors posited was requisite to achieving autonomy. Goldman's failure to recognize her own biases hampered her magazine's otherwise groundbreaking critiques of institutional sexism.¹⁹⁷

Radical Women against War

Socialist suffragists joined the middle-class chorus that claimed voting women would end war. As Kathleen Kennedy observes, the war enabled suffragists to challenge hegemonic definitions of patriotism and citizenship in ways that upended beliefs about masculinity and femininity. Social feminists argued women's role as mothers made them value life while male warriors devalued it.¹⁹⁸ Conversely, radical press imagery reified conservative stereotypes about female domesticity to make its antiwar arguments. "Women as active agents or independent citizens rarely appeared in socialists' antiwar rhetoric," Kennedy states.¹⁹⁹ A *Call* cartoon depicting a woman suckling a baby amid corpses and skulls typified both radical and mainstream antiwar imagery.²⁰⁰ In 1914, the *Masses* offered a rare empowering cartoon of women in war in a double spread by Sloan. A confident-looking woman stands with one arm akimbo, sleeves rolled up, and clutching "Plans" in her hands, signaling female autonomy. Behind her, women rebuild a city. "The war's over," a rifle-toting soldier informs her. "You can go home now." She retorts that if he gives up his gun, the women "perhaps" will let him help rebuild society."²⁰¹

The *Masses* also published feminist-pacifist Rosika Schwimmer's pioneering

recognition of rape as a war crime. She wrote of “atrocities committed by *all* armies on female human beings between the ages of five and eighty-nine in all the countries where the game of war is being played.”²⁰² Birth-control activist William Robinson commented sardonically in the *Call* on the “horrible ghastliness” of wartime rape, “One of the beautiful fruits of war!”²⁰³ *Mother Earth*’s July 1915 cover featured a dead woman, apparently raped, alongside her dead baby as a soldier exits her bedroom.²⁰⁴ The *Call* also critiqued war through a female lens. “The picture of a woman refugee giving birth to her child in a filthy shed, without privacy, without comfort, without care, without hope, is far more real to a woman than the picture of man meeting an agonized death on the battlefield,” a “Woman’s Sphere” column commented.²⁰⁵ *PW* offered a distinctly gendered technique for protesting the war by advising women to avoid idolizing men in uniform.²⁰⁶

The Case of Kate Richards O’Hare

The notion of women reduced to breeding cannon fodder for the state appalled radical women. No one made this antiwar argument more passionately than O’Hare, arguably the most widely published woman in the socialist press.²⁰⁷ Besides her *Appeal to Reason* women’s column, her work appeared in *American Socialist*, *Chicago Daily Socialist*, *Christian Socialist*, *Coming Nation*, *International Socialist Review*, *Socialist Woman*, *National Rip-Saw*, *New York Call*, *Party Builder*, and *Wilshire’s*, among others. Wayland hosted her 1902 wedding to socialist organizer Francis P. O’Hare at his Girard farmhouse.²⁰⁸ O’Hare went undercover in overalls to investigate appalling working conditions in factories producing clothing, artificial flowers, candy, buttons, and watches —“wherever girls and women are herded into the army of industry.”²⁰⁹ She supported suffrage in the belief ballots would help women protect their home and family, an argument that she detailed in a four-part 1914 *Rip-Saw* series.²¹⁰ As an associate editor of *Rip-Saw*, she covered the Triangle shirtwaist factory fire, women’s property rights, and prostitution. Although she penned a feminist analysis of the Bible, O’Hare declined to call herself a feminist.²¹¹ She stuck with the Marxists’ simpler notion of capitalism as the root of all gender trouble.²¹²

As she juggled her journalism career and demanding lecture tours while raising four children, O’Hare embodied the conflicts radical women discussed

across their media. “I can still hammer my trusty typewriter with my hands and rock the cradle with my feet,” she wrote *Appeal* editor Fred Warren following her daughter’s birth in 1906.²¹³ The quip belied the strain on the pioneering career woman. The woman who once described homemaking as “the greatest art known to man, that of making a house Home, and giving life to well-born children,” left home for months at a time for her *Rip-Saw* lecture tours.²¹⁴ As *Rip-Saw*’s business manager, Frank managed her career and the home front. Both eventually suffered temporary nervous breakdowns. Basen views O’Hare as a transitional figure between the Victorian true woman and second-wave feminists.²¹⁵ Even though O’Hare preached that socialism would return women to the home, such a fate would have been torture for her.

In 1917, O’Hare zigzagged across the country delivering her antiwar message even after American soldiers sailed for France. On July 17, she gave the same speech in Bowman, North Dakota, she had delivered more than one hundred times, always under the watchful eyes of Justice Department authorities listening for seditious utterances. The speech included her stock criticism of the warring nations’ treatment of women as brood animals to produce soldiers. Several days later, federal agents arrested her under the new wartime Espionage Act of 1917 and charged her with undermining the war effort.²¹⁶ O’Hare barely slowed down as she awaited trial.

Conclusion

Radical press contents demonstrate radical women’s diversity. Far from a monolithic entity, radical women offered varied views as they debated women’s role, a question that continues to roil American culture in the early twenty-first century. A rich radical print culture shaped and reflected women’s views as they challenged their roles in the home, in public, and male-dominated radical organizations. Socialist journals most visibly provided women with the community, education, information, and voice they needed to create and sustain a female radical culture that could challenge the male-dominated party, although it was short-lived. It is no coincidence that the rise and fall of *Progressive Woman* paralleled women’s fortunes in the party. The IWW’s ambivalence about women’s role hampered its newspapers’ abilities to fulfill some basic social-movement media functions for women, although they provided women with information and education about industrial unionism. Anarchists’ inherent hostility toward suffragists and professional women, however, often made

Mother Earth a reactionary force in the woman's rights movement, despite its pioneering advocacy for sexual liberation. Women who sought identity and community in much of the anarchist press paid for it by denying parts of themselves. Ultimately, the radical imperative to privilege class above gender solidarity made it impossible for the radical press to foster among women the group identity that a social movement needs to thrive.

But women weren't just subjects of the radical press—they were players. Reading and writing in socialist newspapers were integral to how women contested their subordination in the social movement. Women fought for equality on two fronts, as radical men were as apt as capitalists to take their privilege for granted and internalize restrictive beliefs on female capabilities and rights. Radical press pages also offer ample evidence that women were very much a part of the labor and culture wars that embroiled American workers in the dawn of industrial capitalism.

Despite their feminist shortcomings, radical journals took a lead role in addressing a seminal twentieth-century question: "Are men and women different or the same?" They wrestled with how to cut the tension between the public and private spheres. Prioritizing class over gender oppression—or denying its existence—made it almost impossible to combat sex discrimination. Some radical visions for improving cultural institutions were creative, although the dismissal of sex discrimination as a problem for socialism to sweep away like a broom limited the radical ability to reforge social institutions. Perhaps the radical press's greatest legacy is its successful fight for birth control, which truly launched a lasting revolution that transformed millions of women's lives.

CHAPTER TEN

SUPPRESSION

SILENCING THE RADICAL PRESS DURING WORLD WAR I

The spirit of heresy hunting and witch burning had come back to America.

MORRIS HILLQUIT, *Loose Leaves from a Busy Life*

■ Late on the afternoon of June 16, 1917, Emma Goldman was working in a room inside 20 East 125th Street in New York that doubled as the office of *Mother Earth* and the newly established No Conscription League. She had retrained her focus from championing birth control to combatting a new law requiring that by June 5 all men between ages twenty-one and thirty years register for the military draft. Alexander Berkman was upstairs working on the *Blast*, as fiercely pacifist as it was before the United States declaration of war on April 6. A number of volunteers also bustled about the building when eight men stormed inside.

“I have a warrant for your arrest,” a U.S. marshal told Goldman.

“I am not surprised,” she replied. “Yet I would like to know what the warrant is based on.” He produced a copy of *Mother Earth*’s June number. The cover cartoon condemned the draft. Ben Reitman’s anticonscription essay inside informed readers the average soldier lasted eight weeks in the trenches. The marshal flipped the pages to another article that described rallies conducted by Goldman and Berkman’s No Conscription League. On May 18, the pair rallied some eight thousand people who demanded the draft’s repeal; on June 4, another fifteen thousand protesters spilled from a jammed hall in which they spoke and onto a Bronx street singing “The Marseillaise” before hundreds of soldiers disbursed them.¹ The *Mother Earth* article boasted the league had distributed one hundred thousand copies of the No-Conscription manifesto: “We will resist conscription by every means in our power, and we will sustain those who, for similar reasons, refuse to be conscripted.”² Goldman readily acknowledged she

was the author. She volunteered that she stood for everything in the magazine, which she had called her child since its birth twelve years earlier. Police arrested her. They climbed upstairs a few minutes later and arrested Berkman. Both were charged with obstructing the draft, in violation of the federal Espionage Act that had gone into effect less than twenty-four hours earlier.

Meanwhile, two police detectives and four deputy marshals rummaging through the offices found books by George Bernard Shaw, William Morris, August Strindberg, Maxim Gorky, and Frank Harris, among others. They seized everything, including a card index, bank-and checkbooks, and thousands of copies of *Mother Earth* and the *Blast*. When the police finished, they whisked the prisoners to the federal building. It was too late to arraign them that evening, so they locked them up in the Tombs.³

■ ■ ■

So began the most oppressive chapter of censorship in American history. The idea of workers manufacturing objects to kill fellow workers appalled the uniformly pacifist radical press. Its allegiance was to other workers, not the nation state. Labor radicals equated militarism with the state militia and private guards that pointed bayoneted rifles at them outside the factories and mines where they worked. American radicals decried rising militarism long before the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of the Austria-Hungarian Empire, on June 28, 1914, triggered a lethal game of dominoes that would claim some 15 million lives. This chapter will trace how the radical press record of protesting war in general swelled into a desperate bid to keep the United States out of Europe's Great War, triggering a brutal backlash from the federal government.

Pacifism in the Radical Press

Progressive Woman had proposed women create a "vast antiwar league" as early as 1909.⁴ The journal was among many radical periodicals that declared the Boy Scouts of America a ruse for militarists.⁵ *Appeal to Reason* branded the organization "the most sinister and diabolical attempt ever made, akin to the white slave traffic to debauch youth."⁶ That same year the *Call* scoffed at "bourgeois peace societies" that failed to connect capitalism and war.⁷ *Industrial Worker*, inspired by general strikes tearing through France, reprinted a Walter Crane illustration of a French worker confronting a soldier with a question: *Would You Kill Your Fathers, Brothers and Fellow Workers?*⁸ H. Gaylord

Wilshire theorized capitalists brew war to stem unemployment by harnessing factories to produce such “useless and unnecessary things” as weaponry.⁹ In 1913, from his vantage point in London, Wilshire presciently predicted in his fading journal that calls to patriotism would trump working-class self-interest. “If it were a case of sitting down and listening to the voice of reason, there would never be a German working man in favour of military expenditure,” he observed. “It is a question of the war lords talking about the glory of the Fatherland and arousing his tribal instinct.”¹⁰ Wilshire sided with his adopted homeland once war erupted.

Mother Earth pleaded vainly in August 1914 for European workers to stop the war by walking off the job.¹¹ The magazine’s damning September cover illustration by Man Ray, future creator of Dadaism, combined iconic imagery of the crucifixion, the American flag, and prison into crude but powerful visual rhetoric against the carnage. The *Masses* made the point that war in the European citadel of culture obliterated Progressive Era claims about social evolution: in the Art Young cover, two apes read a newspaper headline that screams, “WAR!” The caption has one saying to the other, “Mother, never let me hear you tell the children that these humans are descendants of ours.”¹² The anarchist *Alarm* also referenced Darwinism in a cartoon of two monkeys surveying the battlefield beneath their tree. One says, “I’m glad I haven’t degenerated into ‘MAN’!”¹³ Christian nations at war provided more fertile satirical fodder.¹⁴ *ISR* amplified the ominous portent of photographs that depicted deadly new machines in Europe by tacking onto them titles such as *Latest Type Krupp Gun—This Murdering Machine Was Made by Workingmen*.¹⁵ Young found his art inadequate to express his horror. He added text to a September cartoon that displayed a heavy hand instead of his usual light touch: “Since the declaration of war, there have been about five thousand cartoons picturing death on the battlefield.... I hope cartoonists will go on drawing pictures of the horrors of war. But war is only one big evil—and merely the result of a greater—the struggle for profits. Death lurks in every move made by the profit system.”¹⁶

Socialist journals’ initial faith in the German Social Democratic Party’s pacifism swiftly dissipated.¹⁷ A special Socialist congress in Switzerland also declined to declare a continent-wide general strike to stop the war. Each of the European Socialist parties supported its national government, shredding any vestige of international brotherhood. American workers likewise ignored New York socialist Meyer London’s suggestion that Americans launch a general strike

in the munitions and food industries to disrupt the killing.¹⁸ Max Eastman tried to rationalize that war would hasten the social revolution.¹⁹ The *Call* scurried to absolve European socialists' responsibility for their failure to stem the bloodshed. "There is no disgrace in failure when all power has been exhausted," it editorialized.²⁰ *Mother Earth* was tougher on Europe's reform socialists. "We have no sympathy for these political cattle," Berkman snorted.²¹ European anarchism also disappointed him, particularly Peter Kropotkin's endorsement of Russia's entrance into the war. "Its boasted internationalism, like that of the Socialists, has broken down," he wrote.²² War discourse pushed the radical agenda off radical press pages. *National Rip-Saw* printed one hundred thousand copies of a special September 1914 "War Edition," and the Industrial Workers of the World's *Solidarity* mustered a special six-page antiwar issue on October 31, 1914.²³ *New Review* devoted its October 1914 issue to the war in Europe, which practically consumed all future issues. *Appeal* military stories jumped from a miniscule less than a half percent through 1912 to 11.8 percent after.²⁴

Radical Press Frames of the European War

Radical editors wrestled with how to frame the war. Instead of glorifying the fighting, the *Call*'s editorial page vowed to "provoke and stimulate serious thinking." It optimistically claimed that events "portend the general breakdown of the capitalist system" and war "leads straight to the social revolution."²⁵ Editors explained that war news dominated *Call* pages because its socialist perspective would win converts. The newspaper pointed out it printed news missing from the mainstream press. It made good on its promise to focus on war's human toll instead of its glory. *Call* "staff correspondent" M. J. Phillips reported on thousands of Belgian babies lost during the flight from the German invasion.²⁶ Jane Addams's plan for women of the world to unite against the war won a page-one banner headline in 1915.²⁷ Another byline of interest belonged to Dorothy Day, who worked as a *Call* reporter before she created the *Catholic Worker*.²⁸ A 1917 letter offered a horrific first-person account of battle, purportedly from a Brooklyn youth, which began: "*Jim, I'm writing this letter in a TRENCHFUL OF DEAD! And I've been here, digging and fighting, nearly a week.*"²⁹

John Reed sailed to France in 1914 to see the war for himself, followed by Eastman in 1915 and cartoonist Robert Minor in 1916. The philosophical

Eastman found wartime Paris dull. The exception was when German zeppelins floated above the darkened City of Light, accompanied by the screech of fire trucks as searchlights and shrapnel lit up the sky. “It is their one great taste of adventurous war, and the Parisians love it,” Eastman reported drolly.³⁰ A letter from Minor showed him as apt a reporter as an artist. Describing a train of wounded arriving in Paris by night, he wrote: “My luck was unusual, as they don’t want the public to see such things.... It looked as though the only part of the human body sure to be found on the stretcher was the head.... Here was a man with his eyes and nose shot off, there, one with his lower jaw gone, another with both legs and one arm off, asking me for a light, having become tired of waiting for his neighbor (a fortunate fellow with two arms and a leg) to solve the interesting problem of a patent cigar lighter.”³¹

Fresh from the Mexican Revolution, Reed traversed the front lines but also found war’s aftermath most compelling. He described the “quiet, dark, saddened streets of Paris, where every ten feet you are confronted with some miserable wreck of a human being, or a madman who lost his reason in the trenches, being led around by his wife.”³² Accompanying Reed was his married lover, the noted Greenwich Village salon hostess Mabel Dodge, whose dispatches from Paris to the *Masses* are among the earliest examples of women’s war reportage. Dodge pondered war through a feminist-pacifist lens. “Men like fighting,” she concluded. “There is no deeper meaning than that to be found in it, and there never has been any other.”³³

Protesting “Preparedness” in Words and Imagery

Back in the United States, a “preparedness movement” touted by Theodore Roosevelt, bankers, and industrialists gained momentum throughout 1915. The May 7 sinking of the British passenger liner *Lusitania* by a German U-boat fueled the movement. The *Call* published a collage of alarmist headlines published by what it called, “The Hysterians,” led by the “Wearst” newspapers.³⁴ *Mother Earth* coldly reasoned the passengers’ deaths were no worse atrocities than those perpetrated against Native Americans.³⁵ The *Appeal*’s thousandth number, published January 30, 1915, featured a petition blank for readers to sign, urging President Wilson to disarm. By the end of the year, the *Masses* contained an anti-enlistment pledge form.³⁶ Congress nonetheless vastly expanded the military by passing the National Defense Act of 1916. The ostentatious display of patriotism and militarism in New York’s Preparedness Parade that July reviled

radicals, but they found themselves increasingly isolated as such spectacles stoked war fever.³⁷ One casualty was the antiwar *Rip-Saw*, whose circulation shrank as war hysteria spiraled. When an exhausted Frank O'Hare resigned at the end of 1916, the *Rip-Saw* was renamed *Social Revolution*.³⁸ The preparedness bandwagon grew louder. Besides producing arms and weapons, boosters clamored for compulsory conscription for all males.

Wilson's preparedness policy inspired a ream of antimilitary cartoons. Minor's July 1916 *Masses* back cover, for example, has been hailed as one of history's most powerful denunciations of militarism.³⁹ Applying his trademark grease pencil, Minor sketched a behemoth, headless army recruit. All muscle and obviously no brain, the recruit is beheld by an army medical examiner, who exclaims, "At Last! A Perfect Soldier!" The radicals' antiwar cartoons over the next several years perhaps are their most compelling, in part because they helped spell their publishers' demises. Cartoons often sat at the center of government prosecutions of the radical press during World War I. The persuasive power of visual rhetoric so impressed the federal government it created a Cartoon Bureau under the umbrella of the Committee of Public Information, a public-relations bureau for the war headed by former muckraker James Creelman. Its most enduring product is the Uncle Sam "I Want You" recruiting poster painted by James Montgomery Flagg.

Another iconic image from these years is Boardman Robinson's two-page *Masses* spread in which a firing squad comprising the warring nations' soldiers executes Jesus.⁴⁰ Radical opposition to the war often had a distinctly religious cast. The IWW's satirical streak skewered the hypocrisy it perceived among the church, mass media, and members of the dominant class that framed the war as a Christian crusade. A forceful 1917 *Blast* cartoon portrayed Jesus in prison stripes, hobbled in a cell by a ball and chain. Accompanying text states he has been imprisoned for discouraging men from enlisting by stating: "THOU shalt not kill and BLESSED are the peacemakers."⁴¹ Potent visual rhetoric portraying Christ as a pacifist versus ministers as warmongers sorely tested the nation's commitment to free speech as it edged closer to war. Ironically, *Christian Socialist* editor Edward Ellis Carr was pro-war, a stand that forced the fifteen-year-old newspaper out of business in 1918 as socialists took sides.⁴²



Robert Minor's grease pencil cartoon for the *Masses* has been called one of history's most powerful antimilitary images. *At Last! A Perfect Soldier!* July 1916.

In an eleventh-hour attempt to keep America out of war, on March 31, 1917, the *Call* produced a large antiwar edition, full of letters that supported or opposed U.S. entrance into the European chaos, indicative of how the war split the socialist movement. By the time the Socialist Party's emergency convention opened in St. Louis on April 7, the United States already was at war.⁴³ The *Call's* endorsement of the convention's 140 to 31 to 5 vote to oppose the war unwittingly mimicked crippling party divisions by quibbling at length over much of its phraseology.⁴⁴ Many socialist journalists, including Robert Hunter, Allan Benson, John Spargo, William Ghent, Upton Sinclair, Graham Phelps Stokes, A. M. Simons, William English Walling, and Charles Edward Russell eventually broke from the party because of its antiwar policy. At the other end of the spectrum stood the estranged Wilshire, back in California after fleeing London in 1914. The former publisher led the "super patriots" in their denunciations of

pacifists, even endorsing vigilante violence against war opponents.⁴⁵



THIS man subjected himself to imprisonment and probably to being shot or hanged

THE prisoner used language tending to discourage men from enlisting in the United States Army

IT is proven and indeed admitted that among his incendiary statements were—

THOU shalt not kill
and

BLESSED are the
peacemakers

Like the familiar-looking figure above, radicals risked prison by opposing U.S. entrance into World War I. *Untitled, Blast 2* (March 15, 1917): cover.

Freedom of Expression Is the First Casualty

The *Appeal* correctly foresaw that wartime's "gravest danger" was the loss of free speech.⁴⁶ Radicals' rapture over the Russian Revolution, which deposed the czar in March 1917, further inclined hegemonic forces to silence radicals. Eastman rejoiced in the *Masses* and *ISR* that the equivalent of the IWW was running Russian affairs, an image sure to give politicians and capitalists nightmares.⁴⁷ Berkman declared in the *Blast*, "The Russian Revolution is unquestionably the greatest event of modern times."⁴⁸ American authorities quashed antiwar meetings, confiscated newspapers, jailed radicals, and beat

conscientious objectors. Police raided and temporarily shuttered the anarchist *Alarm* and *Revolt* in Chicago; *Regeneración* in Los Angeles; and the Spanish-language *Voluntad* and Bohemian *Volné Listy*, both in New York. The October–December 1915 and February and March 1916 issues of the *Alarm* were ruled unmailable under the Comstock law’s incitement clause.⁴⁹ The periodical charged that the government intended to wipe out the radical press. “Every uncompromising voice is being silenced,” stated the caption below a cartoon depicting the Post Office’s fist slamming down on the newspaper.⁵⁰

Postmaster General Albert Sidney Burleson wired the San Francisco office a special order to hold every issue of the *Blast* and submit copies to Washington, D.C.⁵¹ Postal inspectors held three consecutive issues, beginning in April 1916, ostensibly because they discussed birth control. In a perverse catch-22, the Post Office then proclaimed the newspaper ineligible for reduced second-class mail rates because it did not regularly appear at stated intervals. Berkman remained defiant. “Have we come to this, that any stupid Post Office clerk may decide what is or is not fit for the people to read?” he asked.⁵² The blatant suppression brought out the noblest side of the unbending Berkman. He called the Post Office’s suppression of a free press “one of the greatest crimes against the people.”⁵³ Police had raided Berkman’s San Francisco office after a bomb killed ten people and injured forty more during a July 22, 1916, preparedness parade. Police found nothing incriminating but filed dubious charges against labor activists Thomas Mooney and Warren Billings. Berkman devoted the *Blast* to defending them. Although Mooney was sentenced to hang, Berkman’s campaign succeeded in pressuring the California governor to commute his sentence to life imprisonment.⁵⁴ Berkman’s other obsession was the looming war.⁵⁵ In January 1917, while Berkman was visiting New York, private detectives overseen by an assistant attorney general raided the *Blast* office. They took manuscripts, subscription lists, cartoons, files, and Berkman’s letters.⁵⁶ Again, no charges were filed. That spring he moved the magazine back to offices above *Mother Earth* in New York, while the Wilson White House mulled new strategies to silence such raucous critics.

On the eve of the country’s entrance into World War I, the U.S. Army War College proposed an elaborate system to censor all printed matter. The American Union against Militarism labeled the system “exceedingly dangerous,” especially for the “really independent press.” It would not only ban criticism of the war effort but also require the censor’s permission for *any* discussion of the war. “It is aimed, not at the enemy, but at the complete control of public opinion in this country in time of war,” *ISR* charged.⁵⁷ The bill was defeated.

Mainstream publishers won another fight against strict censorship when CPI director Creelman issued voluntary censorship guidelines.⁵⁸ The Wilson White House discovered a less incendiary way to silence press critics, one that avoided the odious term “censorship” that so incensed the powerful press barons. “Sedition,” the *Call* stated. “A new word for those in this generation.”⁵⁹

The 1917 Espionage Act

Section 3 of the Espionage Act that Congress enacted on June 15, 1917, prohibited conveying any matter that hindered the U.S. war effort or encouraged the nation’s enemies. It granted the Post Office virtually absolute power to determine whether printed matter obstructed the draft or could “cause or attempt to cause insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, refusal of duty, in the military or naval forces of the United States.”⁶⁰ The Sedition Act enacted May 16, 1918, extended its reach by criminalizing any criticism of the government, military, or flag in wartime. The acts carried a potential twenty-year prison sentence and \$10,000 fine.⁶¹

The Post Office interpreted the Espionage Act broadly—and vaguely. The postmaster general could and did exclude periodicals without offering any explanation. The burden of proof lay with the few publishers in a position to challenge a ruling. As Gilbert E. Roe, attorney for the American Union Against Militarism, pointed out, “Any Post Office official may, under this provision, forbid the use of the mails to any matter that he deems nonmailable. Before the question of the mailability of the matter can be determined by the courts the work desired will be done and [the] publisher ruined.”⁶² The act intentionally bypassed Congress. Legislators launched hearings, and Senator William Borah sought an amendment that would transfer the power to remove periodicals from the postmaster general to the courts, but their efforts were in vain.

Burleson later boasted that thanks to the Espionage Act “hundreds of thousands of tons and millions of pieces of such matter were excluded from the mails and destroyed, during the war.”⁶³ The *Call* labeled him “His Majesty, Czar Burleson.”⁶⁴ Oscar Ameringer, who joined the *Milwaukee Leader* in 1912, in his memoirs blamed Wilson for Postmaster General Burleson’s repression and termed the president the “godfather of Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler.”⁶⁵ Burleson maintained he enforced the act neutrally:

Nothing will be excluded from the mails because of being politically or

personally offensive to the Administration. Nothing will be considered except the welfare of the Nation, and only assaults upon this will bring about action.

But there is a limit, and this limit is reached when a newspaper begins to say that this Government got into the war wrong, that it is there for a wrong purpose, or anything else that impugns the motives of the Government, thereby encouraging insubordination. Newspapers cannot say that this Government is the tool of Wall Street, or of munitions makers, or the tool of anybody.⁶⁶

Despite his protestations, the postmaster general did use the Espionage Act to censor the radical press. After the war, he wrote a colleague: “No one knows better than you that the timidity of the average congressman is such that we never would have been able to get a law enacted that would in express terms protect the country against the dangers of such publications as ‘The Liberator,’ ‘The Call,’ ‘The Appeal to Reason,’ and those offensive negro papers which constantly appeal to class and race prejudice.”⁶⁷

On the same day federal agents arrested Goldman and Berkman, Burleson issued a confidential memo to all postmasters to “keep a close watch on unsealed matter” and submit samples to Washington. His memo went beyond the Espionage Act by criminalizing material he believed could embarrass the government in its conduct of the war. The Post Office instructed local postmasters to offer no explanation for rulings. Soon, requests seeking advice on mailing every kind of print matter in practically all languages deluged Washington. Overseeing the massive mail surveillance was the previously nearly invisible Post Office solicitor, Alabaman-born Judge William Lamar. “We have always known that the Post Office delivers our letters, newspapers, packages, etc., and has nothing to do with lawyers, laws, censorships, and other such modern affairs,” wrote Washington correspondent Reuben Fink for the Jewish newspaper the *Day*. “And, suddenly, as if out of the ground, the word ‘Solicitor’ has appeared in the press.”⁶⁸ The patrician Lamar maintained a pleasant demeanor as he instituted proceedings to revoke repeat offenders’ second-class privileges and helped federal district attorneys defend highly publicized suits against the act brought by the *Call*, *Milwaukee Leader*, and *Masses*.⁶⁹

The *Masses* Challenges the Espionage Act

When the *Masses* delivered its August issue for mailing on July 3, 1917, Henry J. Glintenkamp's macabre cover cartoon, *Conscription*, in which nude corpses slump over a cannon, caught postal inspectors' attention. Two days later, they informed Eastman the issue was nonmailable. The magazine's business manager rushed to Washington to confer with Lamar. The solicitor refused to tell him which provisions of the act the magazine violated or what editorial matter violated the act. *Masses* attorney Roe filed an injunction to stop the postmaster from banning the August issue. The Civil Liberties Bureau called an emergency meeting on July 13. Eastman spoke at its press conference five days later: "The suppression of the Socialist press has actually been more rapid and efficient in this republic than it was in the German Empire after the declaration of war. And as for our celebrated Anglo-Saxon tradition of free speech—it is the memory of a myth. You can't even collect your thoughts without getting arrested for unlawful assemblage."⁷⁰

Only in court did Eastman and his colleagues learn the Post Office claimed the issue violated the Espionage Act provision that forbade obstruction of the draft. Besides *Conscription*, which the Post Office declared "the worst thing in the magazine," violations included other antiwar cartoons; two editorials; Josephine Bell's poem, "A Tribute," in honor of Goldman and Berkman; and Floyd Dell's article, "Conscientious Objectors," which concluded revolution in America no longer was merely a "Utopian fantasy."⁷¹ Roe argued the Espionage Act did not prohibit political criticism or discussion and that the Post Office lacked authority to censor. District Court Judge Learned Hand agreed. He made a novel legal argument that focused on words instead of their effect: he argued that suspect material should be judged solely on what he called an "incitement test": only if its language directly urged readers to violate the law was it seditious.⁷² The Post Office then obtained a stay of the injunction and appealed in distant Windsor, Vermont, in a blatant bid to plead its case before one of the nation's most conservative judges, who promptly reversed Hand's decision. The court empowered the government to exclude material whose "probable effect" would hamper the war effort, which swelled Post Office powers to those of a mindreader.⁷³ On August 14, the Post Office called the publishers to Washington to show why the *Masses*'s second-class mail privileges should not be revoked on the grounds that it appeared irregularly due to the missing August issue. The magazine lost.



Henry J. Glittenkamp's *Physically Fit* was a response to a government mass order for coffins. The government introduced it as supplementary evidence in the *Masses*'s 1918 sedition trial. *Masses*, October 1917.

Fans—including subscribers—had to go to newstands to obtain the *Masses*'s defiant, nonmailable September issue. "Each month we have something vitally important to say on the war," the back cover stated. "We are going to fight any attempt to prevent us from saying it." Charles W. Wood's essay dripped sarcasm: "I, for one, have renounced the devil and all work. I've quit thinking. I ask forgiveness for every thought I ever had and will, hereafter, until further notice, rattle along with the emptiness and ease of a *New York Times* editorial."⁷⁴ Reed called August 1917 the "blackest month for freemen our generation has known."⁷⁵ September grew darker when, under the Espionage Act, the Justice

Department filed criminal charges that accused Eastman, Dell, Glintenkamp, Reed, Young, business manager Merrill Rogers, and poet Bell of conspiring to obstruct the draft. In a rare interview, Burleson said, “I regard Max Eastman as no better than a traitor, and the stuff he has been printing as rank treason.”⁷⁶

After the *Masses* lost its second-class status, four lawyers—Clarence Darrow, Morris Hillquit, Seymour Stedman, and Frank Walsh—visited Burleson to request a clearer and more reasonable policy. He refused, and President Wilson refused to meet them.⁷⁷ The imperious Burleson also refused a request by Congressman John Moon, chair of the House Committee of Post Office and Post Roads, for names of banned publications, locations of post offices that mailed them, instructions to postmasters, and explanations of why they were banned.⁷⁸ Newly elected New York socialist congressman London, not surprisingly, got the same brush-off.⁷⁹ Burleson haughtily informed another senator seeking the same info, “In view of the treasonable utterances of many newspapers and others seeking to embarrass the government in the enforcement of the war measures, it can be readily seen that it would be unwise for the department to enter into a full discussion of all of its plans and conduct to suppress opposition to the enforcement of law.” Anyone who questioned a ruling could seek redress in court.⁸⁰ When Eastman complained about the ruling to Wilson, the latter took the matter up with Burleson, who refused to characterize it as suppression. Wilson told Eastman, “I can only say that a line must be drawn and that we are trying, it may be clumsily but genuinely, to draw it without fear or favor or prejudice.”⁸¹

Espionage Act responsibilities already overwhelmed postal workers when Congress enacted the Trading with the Enemies Act on October 6, 1917. It commanded the Post Office to monitor the contents of all foreign-language periodicals, calculated at 1,293 newspapers and magazines in forty languages with a combined circulation of 8.8 million. Postal workers waded through “tons” of “millions of pieces of mail matter,” most of which officials claimed was “calculated to interfere with the prosecution of the war.”⁸² Congress authorized \$35,000 (increased to \$50,000 in 1918) to hire a half-dozen lawyers, five translators, and a small staff. Nationwide, 435 translators volunteered for \$1 a year each to read the foreign-language press, mainly at universities and colleges.⁸³ The act allowed the Post Office to issue permits to foreign-language newspapers to publish without submitting translations if they passed a laborious review of multiple issues. Hundreds did, such as the monthly Sioux *Iape Oaye* of Santee, Nebraska.⁸⁴ The remainder lacking permits had to submit “a true and

complete translation” of every article that discussed the “Government of the United States, or of any nation engaged in the present war, its policies, international relations, the state or conduct of the war, or any matter pertaining thereto,” along with affidavits declaring the translations’ accuracy. Any publication that failed to provide translation was ruled nonmailable, and the act further made it a crime to publish or distribute the offending periodical in any manner.

Berkman and Goldman’s Trial Sets an Oppressive Tone

Berkman and Goldman’s eight-day trial in July 1917 for violating the Espionage Act set the tone for the suppression to come.⁸⁵ *Little Review* publisher Margaret Anderson, among the literati who attended, left the “farce” shaking in anger.⁸⁶ Goldman and Berkman received two-year sentences and \$5,000 fines. Goldman wrote that the loss of her magazine hurt more than the prospect of two years in prison. “No offspring of flesh and blood could absorb its mother as this child of mine had drained me,” she reminisced, “and now with one blow its life had been snuffed out!”⁸⁷ Leonard Abbott of the Free Speech League commented on the sudden reversals of venerable America civil liberties, “Black has become white, and white is now black.”⁸⁸ *Pearson’s* editor Allen Ricker professed, “I am now convinced that the radical press of America has been sentenced to death.”⁸⁹ Goldman’s persecution continued after she left prison. She was among five thousand foreign-born radicals the Department of Justice netted in the Palmer Raids in thirty-three cities in twenty-three states between November 1919 and February 1920, part of the hysterical “Red Scare” that seeped into the 1920s.⁹⁰ On December 21, 1919, Goldman and Berkowitz were among 249 deported radicals jammed aboard a boat to Russia.⁹¹

Mother Earth was just one of some fifteen periodicals the Post Office charged with sedition in summer 1917.⁹² *Social Revolution* lost its second-class mail status in July.⁹³ The July *ISR* was deemed unmailable, and the August issue was released only after editors removed an offending article. Postal authorities then held all issues from September 1917 through February 1918. Federal agents also intercepted bundles of the magazine shipped by express train. Official word in February that he no longer could use the mails or express forced Charles Kerr to cease publication, though his publishing house staggered on.⁹⁴ *Four Lights*, the antiwar journal of the radical Woman’s Peace Party of New York, also was

quashed, the only women's periodical suppressed by the government during World War I.⁹⁵ So were the journals of publisher Tom Watson, the Georgia Populist turned white supremacist whose antipathy toward the draft drove him back toward socialism.⁹⁶ Some publishers got creative about distributing their nonmailable journals. When *American Socialist* lost its second-class privilege because it advertised an antiwar pamphlet, editor J. Louis Engdahl inaugurated the *Red Express*, which he shipped weekly via rail from Chicago. Each party local was to designate a station agent to receive the shipments. The post office, however, revised the law to make it illegal to transport or sell any periodical excluded from the mail. Engdahl eventually was sentenced to twenty years for violating the Espionage Act. By the end of 1917, the Post Office had revoked the second-class mailing privileges of thirty-six periodicals in fifteen states, half of them in foreign languages.⁹⁷

Mainstream media mustered little opposition to offenses against civil rights. Few journals defended the constitution.⁹⁸ The *New York Times* editorialized in support of the radical journals' suppression.⁹⁹ In Wisconsin, Appleton and Stevens Point newspapers applauded a ruling against the *Milwaukee Leader*, while the Green Bay newspaper called for placing all socialists in concentration camps.¹⁰⁰ Some citizens did protest the postal censorship, as did an irate *Blast* subscriber who wrote Burleson after missing two issues. "I think that I am in much better position than yourself to judge what for me would be forbidden literature," he wrote. "But perhaps since you have set yourself up as my literary censor, you will reimburse me my one dollar."¹⁰¹

Many more citizens supported the Espionage Act, however, including hundreds who reported suspect disloyal periodicals. The League for National Unity issued a three-page statement that supported the infringement upon the First Amendment on the grounds that Congress "can forbid seditious publications just as it can forbid the transport of nitro-glycerine when public safety requires it."¹⁰² Some officials believed the act did not go far enough. Inspector Maxwell complained that banning an issue of the *Call* suppressed only 40 percent of its circulation; newsies hawked the remaining 60 percent on New York street corners. "Nothing would impress some of these publications quite so much as to have the worst offenders suppressed with a heavy physical hand," Maxwell wrote solicitor Lamar, "and I mean by this—one where the blow is not lightened by some legal camouflage."¹⁰³ Maxwell wished he could force libraries to destroy "all copies" of books and pamphlets deemed nonmailable.¹⁰⁴

Persecution of the *Milwaukee Leader's* Victor Berger

Of all persecuted radicals, only Victor Berger faced triple jeopardy as a socialist, publisher, and politician. From the start of the war, the *Milwaukee Leader* found itself in an impossible position because it could satisfy neither its antiwar socialist readers nor its German-born audience. Berger's first comment on the war, in 1914, deemed both Russian czarism and German imperialism unacceptable. "Here in America we must make the fight for industrial democracy—for the rule of the people—lest civilization itself may perish," he wrote.¹⁰⁵ A month later Berger lamented socialists' failure to stop it: "This war is the disgrace of the twentieth century."¹⁰⁶ Circulation dropped when Milwaukee's German-language press labeled the *Leader* pro-English. Managing editor Algie Simons resigned soon after Berger hired German-born Ernest Untermann to neutralize Simons's pro-British bias. The *Class Struggle* newspaper said of Berger: "A born jingo he has been a German jingo and an American jingo by turns—contriving a synthesis of the two which has become familiar under the name of Hearstianism, an attempt to put American jingoism at the service of German imperialism."¹⁰⁷ When the *Leader* renounced pacifism in early 1916, some Socialists called for Berger's recall from the party. "War may be hell, but there are some things in this world worse than 'hell,'" the *Leader* editorialized. "Real socialists are willing to fight these things."¹⁰⁸ But the daily remained strongly anti-interventionist until U.S. entry into the war. An April 3, 1917, editorial proposed a wartime program that would nationalize industry, food, and utilities and guarantee an eight-hour day at a just wage and a 100 percent tax on incomes over \$10,000. Letters to *American Socialist* called for shutting down the *Leader* for its support for the U.S. war effort.

Nonetheless, the *Milwaukee Leader* became another casualty of the Espionage Act when on September 22 its second-class status was revoked. Only one in six readers outside Milwaukee resubscribed as mail rates doubled. Ameringer and Berger called an October 13 mass meeting, at which more than five thousand people stood up and cheered Berger for fifteen minutes. At the meeting's end, Ameringer stepped onstage hoisting a washtub, which the crowd filled with more than \$4,000. Some donated jewelry. Ameringer recalled, "Democracy had given its mandate. We carried on." He carried on even though he also faced charges under the Espionage Act, including one count for a satirical poem, "Dumdum Bullets." The daily dropped from twelve to six pages as advertisers withdrew under pressure. It next lost the right to send or receive any mail. "Even a box of strawberries sent to the editor by parcel post was

returned ‘undeliverable under the Espionage Act,’” Berger recalled.¹⁰⁹ As the months rolled by, Ameringer invited the *Leader*’s most prosperous supporters to his office, where he pitched for funds with the plea that unless the daily paid its debts, “the last hope of America’s free press was lost forever.”¹¹⁰ Eventually, even its staunchest supporters dodged Ameringer.

The *Leader* became one of a handful of publications to challenge the postal censorship in court. When a postal hearing upheld its revocation, its publishers sought a writ of mandamus compelling Burleson to restore the newspaper’s second-class rates. The Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia rejected the plea. Judge Charles H. Robb declared that no one could read the *Leader*’s editorials “without becoming convinced that they were printed in a spirit of disloyalty to our government and in a spirit of sympathy for the Central Powers.”¹¹¹ Berger appealed to the Supreme Court.

Berger’s woes worsened in February 1918, when the government indicted him and four other party leaders with conspiracy to hinder the war effort. Milwaukeeans nonetheless elected him to Congress. The quintet’s dramatic four-week trial in Chicago the following winter ended with their January 8, 1919, conviction of violating the Espionage Act. They were each sentenced to twenty years in prison. Supporters quickly raised bail to keep them free pending appeal. Under his bail terms, Berger could neither write for nor participate in editorial decisions at the *Leader*. His humiliation heightened when Congress refused to seat him. On November 10, 1919, the House voted to formally exclude him from office for disloyalty by 311 votes to 1. Mainstream media applauded the vote. Milwaukee Socialists responded by nominating him for the hastily called special election for the empty seat. He won by 24,350 to 19,566, 40 percent more votes than in 1918’s three-way race, but Congress again refused to seat him.¹¹²

Nationwide Raids on the IWW and Its Newspapers

On September 5, 1917, the Justice Department raided IWW offices in Chicago, Fresno, Seattle, Spokane, and other cities. They seized everything, in what *IW* called U.S. governmental “terrorism.”¹¹³ Before the nation entered the war, federal officials had barred some of the prolific organization’s dozen publications under the Comstock law’s incitement provision. The Post Office had declared the IWW’s Italian-and Hungarian-language newspapers unmailable in August 1917, and from September 1917 on, *Cultura Obrera*, New York dockworkers’ Spanish organ, routinely was banned, even though officials

acknowledged they found no specific violations. “Though not violating the law openly every one of these lines contain that subtle poison which is the last hope of the Kaiser,” the inspector wrote.¹¹⁴ *IW* believed itself immune from the Espionage Act, as it professed the IWW an industrial rather than political organization.¹¹⁵ The IWW had taken no antiwar actions but refused to sanction Wilson’s crusade. The closest *Solidarity* editor Ralph Chaplin came to direct action against the war was his instruction to readers to claim draft exemptions with the explanation, “I.W.W., opposed to war.”¹¹⁶ Although the organization took no formal position on conscription, a poem in *IW* captured the Wobblies’ pacifist insouciance:

I love my flag, I do, I do,
Which floats upon the breeze,
I also love my arms and legs,
And neck, and nose, and knees.
One little shell might spoil them all
Or give them such a twist,
They would be of no use to me;
I guess I won’t enlist.¹¹⁷

Solidarity editor Chaplin naïvely believed IWW records would clear the organization. “We have nothing to hide,” he assured readers, even though, as historian Melvyn Dubofsky observes, “for thirteen years the Wobblies had been publishing and distributing radical, sometimes revolutionary, literature ... antiwar and anti-government tirades filled the organization’s newspapers, pamphlets, and correspondence.”¹¹⁸ The IWW’s pugnacious journals sealed its fate. Denied its second-class mailing status, *Solidarity* published its last issue October 30, 1917. A *Defense News Bulletin* replaced it in November and continued until July 1918. *IW* somehow stumbled on until May 25, 1918, with Kate MacDonald filling in as editor for her imprisoned husband until her own arrest December 20. J. A. MacDonald and Chaplin were among dozens of IWW leaders indicted on charges of conspiracy to obstruct the war.

Journalism remained the IWW’s lifeline. *IW* printed names of imprisoned Wobblies and lists of indicted men who, according to IWW lawyers, should surrender.¹¹⁹ The rakish rebels retained their Pollyannaish optimism, with such headlines as “Trial to Advertise IWW World Over.”¹²⁰ The prosecution relied heavily on numerous quotations opposing the American military and espousing direct action from *Solidarity* and the *IW*, however, during the Chicago trial of

166 Wobblies, which began April 1, 1918.¹²¹ A *Trial Bulletin* that kept the faithful apprised of courtroom proceedings blamed the government for taking the IWW's revolutionary rhetoric out of context. "Many and ludicrous are the errors the union-crushing pettifoggers of the prosecution have made in attempting to display their familiarity with the vernacular of the working class," one account observed.¹²² The Post Office ruled this mild *Trial Bulletin* number unmailable after granting search warrants to open subscribers' mail. Of the 101 members convicted in Chicago, 13 were editors of IWW journals.¹²³ Inside the Chicago jail, some Wobbly inmates kept busy by starting a newspaper, the *Can-Opener*.¹²⁴

Misuse of the Espionage Act against the Black Press

Federal monitoring of six black journals during World War I is more evidence the government used the Espionage Act to stymie discussion of social issues. These included the *Challenge*, *Crisis*, *Crusader*, *Messenger*, *New York Age*, and *Negro World*.¹²⁵ Letters had poured in from citizens objecting to contents of the NAACP's *Crisis* as well as from local postmasters who refused to deliver it. For example, a Texas lawyer complained the magazine was "filled with poison" and ordered a black barber to stop distributing it; an Idaho woman reported she found "treason in every line."¹²⁶ Arkansas's governor demanded in 1919 that Burleson keep the *Crisis* out of his state.¹²⁷ Offending articles in the January 1918 *Crisis* ruled unmailable under the Espionage Act included an editorial claiming Negroes were valued as soldiers but considered "worse than worthless" when they tried to exercise their civil rights.¹²⁸ The Post Office deemed the April 1918 issue unmailable due to an Alice Dunbar-Nelson skit depicting African American siblings debating the war when their brother is drafted. It ruled "Mine Eyes Have Seen" seditious even though the draftee ends up eager to enlist. In July 1918, the beleaguered *Crisis* urged African Americans to support and join the war effort.¹²⁹

In contrast to W. E. B. Du Bois, *Messenger* editor A. Philip Randolph continued to oppose World War I. The magazine was an adamant defender of free speech. When suffragists, led by Alice Paul's National Woman's Party, were jailed for picketing the White House, the *Messenger* praised their civil disobedience—a strategy that became the linchpin of Martin Luther King's civil rights campaign some forty years later. Randolph observed of the arrests: "This

of itself is of tremendous value, because it starts discussion; the fires through which the fundamental weapons of liberty—free speech, free press and free assemblage—*have been formed*.”¹³⁰

Randolph also protested postal censorship. “We admit that a line must be drawn somewhere,” he wrote. “We believe that the line must be drawn too, more scrupulously against government suppression than against unbridled free speech.”¹³¹ The *Messenger* became the only black periodical to lose its second-class mail privileges in World War I. The Post Office held up the July 1919 issue because it contained the taboo IWW preamble advocating direct action and an article, “Why the Negroes Should Join the I.W.W.”¹³² Racist assumptions riddled inspector Robert Bowen’s analysis of the *Messenger*: “It impresses me as an exceedingly mischievous publication,” he told Lamar, “not to be sneezed at because it is merely a negro publication or because some of its arguments are as immature as practically every one of them is dangerous.” He worried, “This is the first time I have seen a negro publication come out openly as advocating or demanding social equality.”¹³³

Bowen’s blue pencil marks reveal governmental indifference to issues that compelled African American dissent. An August 1919 article, “How to Stop Lynching,” bothered Bowen because of its “frank advocacy of a resort to armed violence and organized force.” The postal authorities’ answer to terrorism against black citizens was to silence discussion about lynching. The newspaper refused to be cowed, and in its next issue it printed a cartoon depicting a rifle-bearing “New Crowd Negro” mowing down members of a white mob. “Since the Government won’t stop mob violence I’ll take a hand,” he says.¹³⁴

Offending articles in other black periodicals were harbingers of the amorphous civil rights movement that fomented through a second world war before gelling in the 1950s, just in time to benefit from the new mass medium of television. The *Guardian* became suspect because of publisher William Monroe Trotter’s aggressive civil rights campaigns.¹³⁵ *Negro World* alarmed officials with its militant rhetoric that encouraged returning black veterans to fight for racial justice. Historian Robert Hill cites *Negro World* headlines, such as “Revolt Threat Is Voiced by Negroes: Bishop Hurst Declares 400,000 Colored Men Who Fought for U.S. Are Ready to ‘Free’ Race,” among reasons federal officials designated it the most radical Negro publication at the end of the war.¹³⁶ Bowen warned of dangerous influences at work “to arouse in the negro a well-defined class-consciousness, sympathetic only with the most malign radical movements.”¹³⁷

Subjectivity: The Case of Two Radical Arizona Newspapers

The experience of two Arizona labor newspapers demonstrates how subjective was interpretation of the espionage and sedition acts. *Arizona Labor Journal* was the organ of the Arizona State Federation of Labor, whose president served as editor. In February 1918, as a “public service,” the state chapter of the American Mining Congress of mine owners sent postal solicitor Lamar several issues of the *Journal* and the Phoenix-based labor paper, *Dunbar’s Weekly*. Chapter headquarters were in Bisbee, site of the infamous 1917 deportation of striking miners. Owners remained locked in bitter battle with miners across the state. Congress state secretary Joseph Curry warned Lamar: “The two publications are insidiously doing their utmost in aid of plans which are developing for another year of misunderstanding and industrial strife and disturbance in the State.”¹³⁸ Lamar ruled that the March 29, 1918, issue violated the Espionage Act. Inspectors underlined three articles: “Mooney Must Be Freed,” “Conscription of Wealth,” and “Billy Waldrop Victim Vigilantes,” which recounted the kidnapping, tarring, and feathering of the Jerome miners’ union leader.¹³⁹ The newspaper also was running its eleventh installment of a sympathetic *New York Evening Post* series, “On the Trail of the I.W.W.”¹⁴⁰ The *Post* article was reprinted in Spanish on page three, which served as “*El Jornal de Trabajo de Arizona*,” the Spanish section of the newspaper edited by Canuto A. Vargas. Curry, of course, was no disinterested observer, and the Post Office served the owners’ interests by silencing the miners’ organ. Curry claimed, “Outside influences have caused all the complaint.” He even charged the radicals committed the tar-and-feathering “for the convenience of the *Journal*.” “Good Americanism,” Curry argued, demanded the Post Office suppress the *Journal* and *Dunbar’s* for the war’s duration.¹⁴¹

Inspectors interpreted articles literally, such as a February 22, 1918, editorial opposing conscription of labor. “It is not necessary—it is not safe; and, if the masters of industry were as wise as they pretend, they would drop the subject—it is a loaded stick of dynamite. The harder you press it, the harder it kicks back.” An analysis of *Dunbar’s* likewise construed the most negative meaning from a March 30, 1918, passage that read: “The battlefield of Europe today is covered with hundreds of thousands of dead men; men who sacrificed to prolong and promote such inhumanity to man. Millions of gallant lives have been sacrificed the past three years to satisfy that damnable lust for power and greed.” The inspector reported, “This is an underhanded way of saying that the European war is a capitilistic [*sic*] war and it is also a call to the readers under the guise of

prophecy to resort to violence in overthrowing the present system of government.”¹⁴² In New York, postal inspector Louis How’s 1918 campaign to ban the bimonthly *Intercollegiate Socialist* is another illustration of how the Post Office could silence discussion of important public issues. Lamar declined How’s recommendation the April-May issue be held because of an article on “the negro situation” by Debs—“whose name alone is enough to make us suspicious.” The Post Office, however, held up the October–November issue (among others) because it contained an article criticizing British colonialism in India.¹⁴³

More Radical Journals Suppressed

Sometimes just the threat of prosecution was enough to kill radical journals. Inspectors marked several items suspect in the August 1917 *Seven Arts*: Reed’s “This Unpopular War,” Randolph Bourne’s “The Collapse of American Strategy,” and a poem and editorial that lamented the war.¹⁴⁴ “‘*Enemies Within*,’ shrieked the old New York *Tribune* and spat snake’s venom at Bourne and the rest of us,” recalled editor James Oppenheim.¹⁴⁵ Bourne’s series of essays opposing the war have endured as masterpieces. Frightened by the Espionage Act, the *Seven Arts*’s wealthy backer withdrew her funding. It shut down in October, before merging into the *Dial*. The censorship even affected art journals such as *Camera Work*, which ceased publication in 1917.

The post office’s long campaign against the *Appeal to Reason* ground on during the war. In 1915, as editor of the *Appeal to Reason*, Allan Benson, a former *Detroit Times* editor, campaigned for peace in his column, “A Way to Prevent War.”¹⁴⁶ When he left in 1916 to run as the Socialist presidential candidate, his successor, Louis Kopelin, formerly of the *Call*, continued to oppose U.S. entrance into the war but limited commentary.¹⁴⁷ The *Appeal* never advised readers not to register with the Selective Service, although it suggested they register as conscientious objectors.¹⁴⁸ Once the United States entered the fray, it limited criticism to demand only that the war end with neither side annexing nations.¹⁴⁹ As it had in previous battles, the weekly conflated achieving world peace with boosting circulation.¹⁵⁰ The post office refused to mail the June 30, 1917, issue, even though its frontpage editorial, which called upon Wilson to specify his postwar plans for Germany, also lauded American press freedom that protected such comments.¹⁵¹ New owner Emanuel Julius

lacked Julius Wayland's stomach for fighting the government. By the end of the year, the feisty weekly was supplanted by the *New Appeal*, which pledged to support the war as part of the social revolution.¹⁵²

In 1918, the postal inspectors' green pencils declared nonmailable the venerable *Weekly People*, the vitriolic Socialist Labor Party paper the late Daniel De Leon had edited for more than a decade.¹⁵³ By that fall, the government had interfered with some seventy-five papers, forty-five of them socialist.¹⁵⁴ Individuals also were targeted. Hillquit stated that by spring 1918, the law resulted in about one thousand indictments and more than two hundred convictions.¹⁵⁵ They included Debs, sentenced to ten years in prison for urging draft resistance in a Canton, Ohio, speech. He received 913,664 write-in votes (3.4 percent of the total) for president in the 1920 election without leaving his Atlanta federal prison cell.¹⁵⁶

"No person suspected of radical or pacifist opinions was safe," stated Hillquit, who defended many journalists and others charged under the act, including journalists at the *Masses*, *Milwaukee Leader*, *Pearson's*, *Forverts*, and *American Socialist*, as well the newspaper he helped found, the *Call*. When the daily lost its second-class privileges because of an October 3, 1918, article headlined "Bankers Hope to Sue Soldiers Back from War to Cut Wages," Hillquit sought a writ of mandamus from the Supreme Court. The justices rejected it. Then, when the Post Office continued its ban even after the war ended, he filed a half-million-dollar suit against Postmaster General Albert Sidney Burleson. *Call* journalists soldiered on despite the blow to circulation and finances. So did Hillquit, arguing inside various courtrooms that the socialist press was truly American and that socialists believed patriotism included the freedoms of press and speech and the right to criticize government. He recalled, "The spirit of heresy hunting and witch burning had come back to America in the year of our Lord 1918."¹⁵⁷

A sliver of light pierced this gloom when a single juror's refusal to convict the *Masses* journalists at their April 1918 trial forced a mistrial, and a second conspiracy trial that autumn won acquittals for the codefendants, including Reed, who trekked back for the event from covering the Russian Revolution.¹⁵⁸ Most defendants tried under the Espionage Act, however, were less fortunate. Among the *Masses* trial observers sat Kate Richards O'Hare, awaiting an appeal of her own conviction under the Sedition Act for describing American women as brood animals for the military. Her case jeopardized more than free speech. As Kathleen Kennedy observed, "At stake in O'Hare's case was how women's violation of patriotic motherhood endangered the state's production of loyal

citizens in general and soldiers in particular.”¹⁵⁹ The only mother imprisoned under the act entered the Missouri State Penitentiary at age forty-three on April 15, 1919, to begin her five-year sentence.¹⁶⁰

Conclusion

The *Masses* won the battle but lost the war. It was gone by the time of its editors’ acquittal. So were almost all of the periodicals described here, some forever.¹⁶¹ After the war, the Supreme Court upheld the Espionage Act in several landmark cases.¹⁶² The years surrounding World War I remain the most oppressive in twentieth-century American history.

The radical periodicals’ demise marked the end of a vibrant, eclectic radical print culture unmatched in the United States until the heretical underground press surfaced in the 1960s.¹⁶³ “The real tragedy,” according to historians H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, “was the suppression of debate and inquiry so important to the democratic process.”¹⁶⁴

CONCLUSION

RADICAL MEDIA IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The jury is still out on whether the Internet will fulfill its promise of liberation.

CHARLES LINDHOLM AND JOSE PEDRO ZÚQUETE, *The Struggle for the World: Liberation Movements for the Twenty-First Century*

■ On July 13, 2011, the Canadian magazine *Adbusters* introduced on its blog the Twitter hashtag #OccupyWallSt. Inspired by the Arab Spring protests in Cairo's Tahrir Square, *Adbusters* proposed a protest against the corporate greed run amok on symbolically rich Wall Street. Since 1989, the satirical *Adbusters: Journal of the Mental Environment*, a self-described "revolutionary magazine with a revolutionary agenda," has skewered consumer culture and corporate globalization with visceral imagery, sly spoofs, and cogent commentary.¹ Although fewer than two hundred protesters bedded down on September 17 in Zuccotti Park—which Occupiers renamed Liberty Square—millions of Twitter Tweets soon propelled the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement to some twenty-five hundred cities worldwide.

Social media were OWS's conduit to the people. Cell-phone cameras flashed images around the world of protesters chanting the Tumblr-launched OWS catchphrase, "We are the 99 percent." Hundreds of thousands of independent Facebook pages, Twitter hashtags, and viral videos on YouTube.com mobilized protesters in the global movement that claims no leader. Anyone interested could click on occupywallst.org to learn how to start a local occupation via meetup.com, download the *Handbook for Bloggers and Cyber-Dissidents*, share opinions in online forums, watch live streams of Occupy events on globalrevolution.tv, seek advice in chat rooms on which supplies to bring to an occupation, search for Occupy actions, get directions to them, keep up with

OWS General Assembly resolutions, browse the strikingly subversive posters spawned by OWS, or donate money, food, shower space, trucks, or time. Information online was infinite and evolving.

■ ■ ■

The parallels between Occupy's concerns and those of radicals a century ago are striking, as is the digital revolution's impact on social movement media. As 2013 began, Occupy Wall Street remained the most visible manifestation of an online culture of rebellion that is the twenty-first century incarnation of the American radical print culture nearly decimated during World War I. Before comparing online radical media's role in the twenty-first-century, however, the conclusion will consider the fate and legacy of the prewar radical press that set so many precedents for Occupy's media innovations.

An End to the "Universal Censor"

The Post Office continued to refuse second-class mail status to radical periodicals until 1921. The year began badly for proponents of a free press, when the Supreme Court ruled second-class postal rates a privilege and not a right.² *Milwaukee Social Democratic Publishing Co. v. Burleson* upheld the Post Office's right to continue to deny second-class status to the *Milwaukee Leader* although the war was over. Justice Louis Brandeis's dissent, however, argued that Congress never empowered the Post Office to rule on any material yet to be published. "If such power were possessed by the Postmaster General, he would, in view of the practical finality of his decisions," Brandeis stated, "become the universal censor of publications."³ The same year, the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia also ruled in the government's favor in the *Call*'s half-million-dollar suit against Postmaster General Albert Sidney Burleson. Since the sedition section of the Espionage Act had been repealed after the war ended, Burleson had justified his denial of the *Call*'s request for reinstatement of its second-class rate on Section 211, the Comstock laws' incitement clause.⁴ Like the *Leader*, the *Call* continued to publish and provide a voice and information for its working-class readership despite the suppression.

The remnants of the radical press had turned to Moscow in 1919 when the left wing of the Socialist Party splintered further into the Communist Labor Party and the Communist Party of America (although the former soon merged into the latter). Eighteen Communist newspapers appeared in New York alone by

1920, although radical press historian Joseph Conlin argues they lacked the prewar radical press's verve. He dismisses Communist journals as dull, dense, and doctrinaire—possessed of what he calls “plain pigheadedness.”⁵ The best-known was the *Daily Worker*, which originated as the weekly *Ohio Socialist* (1917–19) published in Cleveland by the Socialist Party of Ohio. The Post Office nonetheless worried that the postwar radical press grew “speedily bolder and more blatant” because Congress refused to ban it.⁶ Burleson praised Solicitor William Lamar's end run around Congress when Lamar, in one of his last official acts, excluded from the mail all Communist and Bolshevik materials.⁷ The tide turned against postal censorship when Burleson's successor, Will Hays, rejected that blanket ban. “The war is over,” Postmaster Hays declared when he restored mail privileges to the *Call*, the *Leader*, and other radical periodicals on May 25, 1921.⁸ “I am not, and will not allow myself to be made, a censor of the press.”⁹ By the time leftist muckraker George Seldes began publishing his polemical investigative magazine *In Fact* in 1940, the mid-century's most worthy successor to the prewar radical press, the Post Office routinely granted second-class mail status to periodicals without questioning their politics. The *Daily Worker* continued to publish through the 1930s and 1940s. Circulation plummeted after World War II, when its managing editor acknowledged he recruited Soviet agents. Membership of the American Communist Party, which had dropped to some twenty thousand in the mid-1950s, was halved after the newspaper endorsed Moscow's suppression of the 1958 Hungarian uprising.¹⁰ The Marxist *Monthly Review* magazine debuted in 1949 with a lead article by Albert Einstein advocating socialism. Iconoclastic muckraker I. F. Stone, whose eponymous investigative weekly newsletter succeeded *In Fact* during the Cold War, recalled the ease with which he received the precious second-class designation. “There was nothing to the left of me but the *Daily Worker*,” he said. “The difference between the second-class rate and the cheapest third-class rate was my salary.”¹¹

A handful of other counter-hegemonic journals shouldered on in the radical tradition through the conformist 1950s, notably the liberal *Village Voice*, founded in 1955, and the *Progressive*, monthly successor to the leftist *La Follette's Weekly*.¹² Radical periodicals remained suspect, but when Senator Joseph McCarthy's Communist witch-hunt targeted *Monthly Review* editors Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman, they successfully fought back.¹³

Legacy of the Radical Press, 1900–1917

Sweezy and Huberman benefited from the prewar radical press editors' fight for freedom of expression, perhaps the most important part of their legacy. Another vital legacy was the way radical journals fulfilled classic journalism ideals of providing voice for the voiceless. Polemics aside, at the turn of the twentieth century it was often small, amateurish, blatantly biased, radical newspapers such as the Industrial Workers of the World's *Lumberjack* rather than the mainstream dailies that fulfilled the journalistic mission to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. Radicals' challenge to media hegemony contributed to the diversity of viewpoints that make democracy work. As the main conduit for radical views and news inside and outside their movements, the newspapers and magazines of anarchists, socialists, and the IWW formed the backbone of these social movements. They could not have existed without the radical press serving its key functions of providing movement members with community and identity (like the *Appeal* army), information (*International Socialist Review*'s roundup of global socialist news), education (Gaylord Wilshire's theory of "industrial democracy"), a voice (*Industrial Worker* accounts of the IWW free speech fights), a rich culture (*Mother Earth*'s annual anniversary party); and a challenge to hegemony (the *Call*'s antiwar campaign). The radical press left behind a rich repository of radical print culture that, in the wake of the digital information age, never will be seen again.

Ultimately, the radical press was unable to sustain the diffuse radical social movements that percolated before World War I. It is easy to point to the radical press's shortcomings: Contents could be dense, dogmatic, even dishonest. Passion instead of professionalism often shaped its pages. Cartoons revealed race and gender schisms that jeopardized group identity. Vitriol frequently substituted for fact. The simplistic collapse of all social problems into symptoms of capitalism bode poorly for constructing a cooperative commonwealth whose outlines remained blurry. Internecine disputes divided the radical social movement. These shortcomings reflect the challenges of building a cohesive social movement among diverse radicals despite some shared ideals. They underscore an important point: social movement media are only tools—no matter how advanced their technology. Social reality also hampered the radical press, including its lack of funds and the heavy hand of governmental repression. Many Americans simply seemed uninterested in the radicals' call for revolution. Hegemonic powers ultimately prevailed.

The triumph of economic and political hegemony against one of the largest social movements in American history raises more questions than it answers

about the role of the radical press. Perhaps historian James Weinstein was correct when he theorized that by the end of World War I, big business shrewdly had established a “liberal corporate social order” that reigned as American political hegemony throughout the twentieth century. In Weinstein’s view, reforms spurred by the prewar radicals’ demands were co-opted by the capitalist class to serve its interests—mainly to create a stable climate to maximize profits. The more conservative labor unions rather than the political radicals or IWW became a force in mid-century America, for instance, only because their agenda was channeled into the liberal corporate social order’s mantra that constant economic growth benefitted all classes. As Weinstein writes, “False consciousness of the nature of American liberalism has been one of the most powerful ideological weapons that American capitalism has had in maintaining its hegemony.”¹⁴

Yet the persistence of radical media shows that there always has been resistance to this false consciousness, despite capitalist powers’ robust efforts to silence it. As corporations ballooned into omnipotent global conglomerates in the late twentieth century, new generations of social movements surfaced that sought to return power to the people. Communications remained their lifeblood. One conclusion after surveying more than a century of radical media is that no matter how dramatic the changes in communications technology, twenty-first-century social movement media perform nearly the same functions as did their predecessors in the prewar radical press. In the 1960s, the mimeograph machine helped usher in a new generation of the radical press.

The Radical Press, 1960–1990

The 1960s’ radical journalism splashed on the media landscape like a bucket of psychedelic paint. Vietnam War opponents, Black Panthers, women’s liberationists, Students for a Democratic Society, nascent environmentalists, Chicano organizers, and aficionados of marijuana and LSD were among New Left social movement groups that created an eclectic underground press that challenged Cold War hegemony and American consumer culture. Their newspapers were instrumental in building and mobilizing a counterculture that alternative press historian David Armstrong describes as “an important rebellion against the accumulated rigidities of oppressive puritanism, commercialized culture, corporate power, warmaking, and race, class and sex prejudice.”¹⁵ The inexpensive new technology of offset printing, which supplanted mimeographs, made possible more than four hundred underground newspapers published by

the end of the 1970. Anyone with a typewriter could duplicate large quantities of radical literature.¹⁶

These shaggy, youthful underground publishers remained largely unaware of their parallels to radical journalists in the 1910s and their counterculture publications' historical antecedents. In fact, a large part of the radical press agenda was to reclaim the history of disempowered groups such as African Americans, Latinos, and women. Much of the underground press's subversive content sizzled with issues the prewar radicals had tackled a half-century earlier: freedom of expression, a Marxist-based corporate critique, the sexual revolution, antimilitarism, and the rights of labor. The Liberation News Service, created by Raymond Mungo and Marshall Bloom, linked American dissidents with Third World rebels against colonialism much in the way the *International Socialist Review* kept radicals apprised of such struggles a half-century earlier. The leftist investigative magazine *Mother Jones* (founded in 1976) paid homage to prewar radicals when it appropriated the labor agitator's moniker as its title. The underground press served as an especially valuable forum for dissent from media hegemony, as the high costs and hierarchical structure of the ubiquitous medium of television placed it beyond the reach of most social movement groups.

Like their predecessors, the 1960s underground journals provoked with sensational verbal rhetoric—packed with a scatological punch aimed to shock. Their chaotic visual rhetoric imbued with the decade's hallucinogenic ambiance contrasted vividly with the rigid conformity of traditional black-and-white newspaper columns. Glossy *Ramparts* (1964–75) magazine's circulation hit nearly three hundred thousand in 1970.¹⁷ Its defiant December 1967 cover depicted the hands of four editors burning their draft cards, an image Alexander Berkman would have applauded. Counterculture journalists moved beyond the prewar radicals by confronting the racism that confounded their 1910s' forebears. The most militant Black Power periodical was the Marxist *Black Panther*, a more vulgar descendant of the *Messenger*, which urged African Americans to take up arms in self-defense. *Panther* art director Emory Douglas's depictions of police as pigs made him an even more subversive illustrator than Robert Minor.¹⁸ Other leading underground newspapers that popped up across the nation included the *Berkeley Barb*, *Los Angeles Free Press*, New Orleans's *NOLA Express*, and New York's *Rat*. Echoing Conlin's assessment of the prewar radical press, scholar John McMillian argues the underground press was the "New Left's greatest organizational achievement."¹⁹

In another development that replayed the radical press's experience fifty years earlier, those connected with underground periodicals faced harassment,

arrest, and physical attacks by state and local authorities, politicians, and vigilantes. FBI director J. Edgar Hoover employed infiltrators and wiretaps, forged documents, and waged smear campaigns against some journals, especially the *Black Panther*.²⁰ The unforeseen rigors of collective management and omnipresent political factionalism further unstrung the underground press, which faced the same perpetual financial stresses as its 1910s predecessors. In the late 1970s, the more successful underground newspapers evolved into urban alternative weeklies that retain a whiff of their radical roots amid lengthy entertainment listings and raunchy personal ads that have made them lucrative corporate properties.²¹

Radical media critic Robert McChesney lamented in 1999 what he called the Left and labor's retreat from publishing. He argues their organizations mistakenly opted to concentrate on attracting television cameras' attention through public relations instead of educating readers about their progressive causes in their own journals.²² Perhaps that void in radical media helps explain the relative silence by working Americans as their share of the nation's income began to shrink in 1979. By 2010, the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans owned 24 percent of the nation's wealth, up from 18 percent in 1915.²³ Princeton economist and *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman labels the era of the growing income gap the "Great Divergence," yet no social movement to demand reform gained steam anywhere near the scale of the prewar radicals' broad-based activism.²⁴

Pockets of resistance continued to challenge hegemonic powers in their social-movement media. The Alternative Press Center has indexed 948 periodical titles since its 1969 origin as the Radical Research Center at Carleton College in Minnesota. Its Alternative Press Index provides online access to articles from three hundred magazines, newspapers, and academic journals. Newer forms of radical media also began to appear as the century waned, observes alternative media scholar Chris Atton.²⁵ In the 1980s, desktop publishing on personal computers further democratized journalism and yielded a new crop of counter-hegemonic literature, often in the medium of zines. These small-circulation, self-produced publications of text and images on topics too obscure for mass media proved especially appealing to anarchists, who enjoyed resurgence in the late twentieth century.²⁶ Video activists and pirate radio also countered cultural hegemony. A true communications revolution erupted when the infinite Internet flung open limitless possibilities to make oneself heard in the 1990s.

The Radical Press Moves Online

Twenty-first-century radical media has found a new home online. The Web's negligible publishing costs largely eliminate barriers to producing and distributing social movement media. Dissidents can disseminate information and counter hegemonic views on the same media platform as the most elephantine media conglomerates. The Internet's intrinsic interactivity makes social movement Web sites effective organizational forces for mobilization and propagandizing. An early innovator was southern Mexico's insurgent Zapatista Army of National Liberation. Beginning in 1994, the Zapatistas created "the first informational guerrilla movement," by using the Internet to enlist global support for a revolt of indigenous people in Mexico's southernmost state of Chiapas.²⁷ One link to the prewar radicals is that Zapatismo ideology is an amalgam of Ricardo Flores Magón's anarchism, socialism, libertarianism, and indigenous beliefs. Radical media remain the Zapatistas' main weapons; besides a Web site, they operate Radio Insurgente, publish the online *Rebeldia* magazine, and produce independent videos through the Chiapas Media Project.²⁸ The Zapatistas' new media fulfilled all five functions performed by the previous century's radical print culture—creating community and a sense of identity among movement members, providing information about movement events and issues, educating the public and potential converts about the movement, giving followers a voice, and creating culture.²⁹ On a symbolic level, scholars Charles Lindholm and Jose Pedro Zúquete observe that the Internet served as a "metaphor for the horizontal, homogenizing, and encompassing Zapatista message."³⁰

The Battle for Seattle at the end of 1999 proved pivotal in shaping social movements' online media strategy. Organizers used cell phones and Web sites to deploy tens of thousands of protesters who temporarily closed down a World Trade Organization meeting.³¹ Most significantly, they established an Independent Media Center, which via the Web globally distributed the protesters' commentary, imagery, audio, and video. In another example of the importance of journalistic voice, their media accounts dramatically countered mainstream media frames, which emphasized violence and ignored the substance of the WTO protest against globalization.³² A small contingent of "Black Bloc" anarchists that smashed windows received an inordinate amount of coverage. Anarchists took advantage of the larger audience that bad publicity generated by mounting an online counter-public relations campaign.³³ Independent Media Centers have since been established on every continent in a decentralized and

autonomous network connected by open-source publishing on its multilanguage Web site. Indymedia describes itself as “a network of collectively run media outlets for the creation of radical, accurate, and passionate tellings of the truth.”³⁴ Using the power of the Internet, Indymedia was the first significant social movement media outlet to challenge the burgeoning social inequity of the late twentieth century so reminiscent of the Gilded Age that galvanized the prewar radical press.

In addition to new entities like Indymedia, some survivors of the century-old prewar radical press persisted into the digital age. Before Charles Kerr retired in 1928, he turned over his publishing house to the Proletarian Party, which, on a much smaller scale, continued his tradition of publishing a broad range of radical works. After reorganizing in 1971, in cooperation with the Illinois Labor History Society, the company published new biographies of Eugene Debs and Lucy Parsons, as well as an edited collection of Covington Hall’s work and unfinished autobiography. It also reprinted Kerr’s old Marxist titles along with *The Autobiography of Mother Jones*. The Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company continues to find audiences for a steady stream of radical titles in the twenty-first century.³⁵ Competitors include the socialist *Monthly Review Press*, an outgrowth of *Monthly Review* magazine. In Wisconsin, the daily *Milwaukee Leader* circulation peaked at forty-eight thousand in 1934 despite crippling debt. The Socialist daily ceased to exist in 1939 when three former *Milwaukee Sentinel* executives who bought it ran the renamed *New Milwaukee Leader* as a liberallabor daily. It became the *Milwaukee Evening Post* in 1940 and was a union periodical when it stopped publishing in 1942. Victor Berger got a new lease on life when the Supreme Court overturned his Espionage Act conviction in 1921, and the government formally dropped the case in 1923. He served in Congress from 1922 to 1928.

The *New York Call* also survived online into the twenty-first century. By 1923, circulation had dwindled to four figures, and the debt-ridden daily was without an editor in chief and battered by the Socialist/Communist split. Its publishers turned the *Call* over to a corporation formed by several unions in exchange for \$100,000 in cash and stock. Future Socialist presidential candidate Norman Thomas was named editor. Three months and \$80,000 later, the unions suspended the newspaper, which they had renamed the *Leader* and converted into a labor newspaper.³⁶ The *New Leader*, which debuted on January 19, 1924, continued online as a voice for unions until summer 2010.³⁷

Although the anarchist press was reduced to a single English-language periodical by the end of World War I, the *Anarchist Soviet Bulletin*, anarchism

enjoyed a late-twentieth-century renaissance, characterized by Dionysian raves to electronic dance music. Followers adopted as their philosophical slogan the famous quote (erroneously) attributed to Goldman, “If I can’t dance, I don’t want your revolution.”³⁸ Beginning in the late 1970s, anarchist periodicals began to pop up across the nation: *Soil of Liberty* in Minneapolis; *Bayou La Rose* in New Orleans; *Emancipation* in Washington, D.C.; *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*, in Columbia, Missouri; and *North Country Anvil*, a Christian anarchist-pacifist magazine in rural Minnesota.³⁹ Anarchists also were early and enthusiastic converts to the Internet. The vast anarchist.net archive is perhaps the best known among 85 million results that popped up in a 2013 Google search for anarchist Web sites. In contrast is the *Match!* This exemplar of anarchist contrarianism pointedly has no Web site. Since 1969, Fred Woodworth has irregularly published the print zine with a global circulation of two thousand from his home in Tucson, Arizona, without digital technology.⁴⁰

The beleaguered but prolific IWW press also proved a phoenix. *Industrial Worker* resurfaced soon after the Chicago trials, even though the Post Office routinely refused to mail it.⁴¹ Former IWW leader William Haywood was not around to witness its resurrection. When appeals of his Espionage Act conviction ran out in 1921, he and eight other Wobblies fled to Russia rather than join forty-six fellow workers who started their prison terms. Communism also split the IWW, which resulted in the firing of the *Solidarity* and *One Big Union Monthly* editors in 1921.⁴² Yet as of April 1922, the organization was publishing three English-language papers and ten in other languages.⁴³ The IWW carried on but never again became the labor force it had been in the 1910s. Ralph Chaplin was among early Wobblies who eventually renounced the organization.⁴⁴ The IWW continues to organize unskilled laborers; an affiliate is Jimmy John’s Workers Union. The organization maintains an active online presence. Locals populate the Web on sites such as *Wobbly City*, the official blog of the IWW’s New York City branch.⁴⁵ The national headquarters publishes *IW* ten times a year, downloadable from the IWW Web site. In February 2011, the site called for a nationwide general strike to protest union-busting in Wisconsin.⁴⁶

The Global Anticapitalist Social Movement and the Radical Press

The venerable IWW is one of myriad strands of radicalism loosely coalesced into a broadly defined anticapitalist movement that relies almost totally on the

Internet for communication. The common goal of the anticapitalist movement's eclectic collection of local activists that represent many ethnicities, nationalities, and languages is to replace what they brand "McWorld" with a more equitable and sustainable global society—their reinterpretation of a cooperative commonwealth. As was the case in the uneasy alliance a century ago among the prewar socialists, anarchists, and industrial unionists, the anticapitalist movement's multitudinous elements differ in their vision of a sustainable society. The disputed terms for this fluid social movement—other names include the "alter-globalization movement," "counter-globalization movement," or "global justice movement"—indicate its organizational challenges.

Unlike the early socialists, anticapitalists largely reject the Marxist collapse of all oppression into class conflict. While anticapitalists' view that multinational corporations have co-opted democracy mirrors the earlier radicals' sentiment, a major difference from prewar radicals is that anticapitalists do not necessarily demand abolishing capitalism. Occupy Wall Street, for example, called for a capitalism that serves people, although, as its critics observe, the Occupy agenda sounds similar to that of the 1910s' moderate socialists.⁴⁷ OWS's reluctance to label itself socialist may indicate how in the past century the processes of hegemony have intensified, making it even harder to challenge the status quo. Social critics claim hegemonic forces have grown more sophisticated, as reflected in such distractions from social inequity as the elevation of consumerism, explosion of mass media entertainment, and stimulation of distant wars. Noam Chomsky is the most prominent among scholars who argue that unseen powers systematically deploy these largely accepted aspects of modern life to disempower the citizenry.⁴⁸

Others dismiss Chomsky's "propaganda model" and related conspiratorial media theories as reductionist or outdated.⁴⁹ The Internet has democratized information distribution so that reaching the masses no longer requires a multimillion-dollar broadcast network. Digital media, as media scholar Larry Gross points out, give social movements public forums as influential as the institutions they critique.⁵⁰ Even if the Internet has not made social movements more powerful, it has allowed them to act on an international scale that keeps pace with globalization and related social issues. Copious currents of global activism also tend to refute heavy-handed theorizing, even though a new generation of muckrakers—*Fast Food Nation* (2002) author Eric Schlosser is one—documents how corporate power has infiltrated all aspects of life.⁵¹ Another is Canadian author Naomi Klein, whose *No Logo* (2000) is a major influence upon the diffuse anticapitalist movement's opposition to corporate

globalization.⁵² Leftist filmmaker Michael Moore is probably the anticapitalists' most recognizable face, and his films, including the Oscar-winning *Fahrenheit 9/11* and *Capitalism—A Love Story*, are among the most successful examples of radical media penetrating mass-media hegemony. These commercially successful anticapitalist cultural products demonstrate the continued interwoven threads between radical and mainstream media.

The anticapitalist movement's wide arc helps explain why filmmaker Moore offered to pay a \$20,000 bail for arrested WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange in December 2010.⁵³ Assange is a fellow anticapitalist whose revolutionary whistle-blowing via the Internet has upended concepts of journalism and access to information. Assange's campaign for radical transparency threatens the global order, as information control is integral to maintaining hegemony. Bank of America was among multinational financial institutions that by refusing WikiLeaks transactions in effect shut down the banned site.⁵⁴ In 2012, Assange received asylum in the Ecuadorian embassy in London to avoid extradition to Sweden on sexual assault charges that he claimed were false. The Obama administration considered charging him under the 1917 Espionage Act, part of a crackdown on government leaks to the press that drew comparisons with the repressive Wilson administration of World War I.⁵⁵ A new socialist Web site called the *International Socialist Review* (no connection to the original) declared Assange victim of a witch-hunt to freeze the free flow of information.⁵⁶

WikiLeaks' methods and insistence on an absolute public right to know everything about government has spawned debate on whether WikiLeaks is journalism.⁵⁷ WikiLeaks' receipt of the 2011 award for Most Outstanding Contribution to Journalism from the Walkley Foundation, the Australian equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize Board, complicated the issue.⁵⁸ The title of a 2013 feature film about Assange—*The Fifth Estate*—captured how WikiLeaks moves beyond concepts about the venerable Fourth Estate. Critics charge Assange risked individual lives and international diplomacy when he opened his Pandora's box of secret documents.⁵⁹ Others consider him a hero. "Wikileaks is a powerful new way for reporters and human rights advocates to leverage global information technology systems to break the heavy veil of government and corporate secrecy that is slowly suffocating the American press," David Samuels wrote in the *Atlantic*.⁶⁰ Following in the steps of radical journalists a century ago, Assange stepped into politics in 2013 when he unsuccessfully ran for a Senate seat in Australia under the banner of the newly created WikiLeaks Party. Assange participated via Skype in the party's launch in Canberra.⁶¹

Even sympathetic observers of online social movement media, however, scoff at exaggerated claims the Internet will usher in global social equity. Atton, an early booster of the Internet's promise to usher in a new golden era of alternative media, turned increasingly skeptical at the turn of the twenty-first century.⁶² He believes history shows that the more success a medium enjoys, the less radical its message. Hegemonic forces also are at work to tame the Internet. These include corporate and governmental moves to restrict Internet access, invade users' privacy, and commercialize the virtual world.⁶³ A corporation even owns the term "radical media": Lawyers forced organizers of the 2011 Radical Media Conference to change its name to the Rebellious Media Conference. [@radical.media](#) LLC, a multimedia production firm, charged them with unlicensed use of its trade name.⁶⁴ McChesney and John Bellamy Foster, editor of the *Monthly Review*, note dubiously that corporate monopolies dominate the Web a mere decade after advocates hailed it as a hyper-democratic, planetary public sphere. Google, for example, which claims 70 percent of the search-engine market, in 2011 was on track to top the peak market share of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil.⁶⁵

The pair's pessimism stems in part from author Michael Hindman's conclusion that online media companies are more concentrated than were late-twentieth-century global media conglomerates. Despite millions of Web sites, Hindman claims, the top ten in 2010 accounted for about 75 percent of page views.⁶⁶ McChesney is among those who fear the capitalist imperative is undermining the most revolutionary and democratic aspects of Internet technology.⁶⁷ Social movement scholars Lindholm and Zúquete conclude, "The jury is still out on whether the Internet will fulfill its promise of liberation or instead legitimizes new forms of enslavement."⁶⁸ Author Evgeny Morozov argues the latter is occurring. He rejects "cyber-utopians" who fail to recognize that repressive regimes also can harness the Internet. He writes, "Technology changes all the time; human nature hardly ever."⁶⁹ He cites the West's premature euphoria over the international outrage ignited by heartbreaking images that protesters captured on cell phones of bystander Neda Agha-Soltan bleeding to death on a Tehran street during the disputed 2009 Iranian elections.⁷⁰ Iranian officials used the same social media to hunt down and brutally silence the protesters, Morozov points out in *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom*. The Committee to Protect Journalists also details how authoritarian governments are marshaling "online oppression."⁷¹

Yet even as Morozov was penning *Net Delusion*, Egyptians were wielding

social media in a revolution that began on Facebook and ended with the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak. When police dragged a twenty-eight-year-old Egyptian man out of an Alexandria cybercafé and beat him to death on June 6, 2010, horrific photographs that his brother took in the morgue with his mobile phone went viral on the Internet. YouTube videos reminded viewers of the happy young man he had been.⁷² The imagery inspired a Facebook page, “We Are All Khaled Said,” which within days had 1.4 million followers and became a touchstone of the Egyptian pro-democracy movement.⁷³ Egyptians Tweeted in real time to organize protests on local streets and keep the world informed. After the government cut off the Internet, Google created Speak2Tweet, which enabled citizens to leave voice messages, which were posted on Twitter by the giant search engine. While decades of oppression rather than social media caused the Egyptian Revolution, and the age-old tactic of human beings taking over the streets toppled their oppressor, social media adeptly fulfilled basic radical-press functions. Their successful counter-hegemonic message offered community and group identity, provided a voice for dissidents, supplied information to advance their social movement, educated and converted the public, and created a vibrant movement culture.

Occupy Wall Street Parallels with the Prewar Radical Press

Occupy Wall Street illustrated the parallels between the functions of twenty-first-century social movement media and the radical press between 1900 and 1917. First, despite the distance from the typewriter to Twitter, occupywallst.org/ chat rooms and Listservs offered the same sense of group identity to Occupy’s far-flung imagined community that radical journals such as the *Appeal to Reason*, *Mother Earth*, and *Solidarity* offered socialists, anarchists, and Wobblies in the 1910s. Second, searchable databases of Occupy sites and online meetups provided information on movement events similar to the daily lists of socialist meetings and classes published in *Call* columns—but globally. While OccupyWallSt.org appeared surprisingly light on theoretical essays, it fulfilled the education function by linking to Open Library, a project of the Internet Archive. Site users also posted articles found elsewhere or submitted by readers that they then discussed in the Forum, where comments attained a level of interactivity their OWS predecessors could only dream of—sometimes more than ten thousand strong. Those comments are one aspect of the voice function that OWS provided for alienated Americans, as did its Chat link. Two years after

police dismantled its tent city, OWS News continued to report on local occupations organized to prevent evictions or protests, such as “Justice for Trayvon” on July 20, 2013, a national day of vigils in one hundred cities in response to the acquittal of the man who killed Trayvon Martin, a fourteen-year-old African American youth.⁷⁴ Finally, Internet instantaneity enabled Occupiers to create a radical culture at lightning speed.

Culture jammers and creatives waged imaginative global meme wars featuring powerful online posters, photographs, and video that harkened back to the *Masses*’s visually sophisticated subversiveness.⁷⁵ An online OWS Poetry Anthology blossomed almost overnight, with contributions from around the world.⁷⁶ Filmmaker Matt Pizzolo turned to the crowdfunding site Kickstarter to finance a hardcover anthology of comics churned out in response to the Occupy movement.⁷⁷ The torrent of Occupy imagery reiterated that visual rhetoric remains as central to social movements as when socialist cartoonists Ryan Walker, John Sloan, and Art Young wielded pens and grease pencils as weapons in class struggle.

The People’s Library in Liberty Square displayed a reverence for books shared by the prewar radicals. The library harkened more connections to the radical press, like the IWW reading rooms where itinerant tomato pickers and lumberjacks gathered to trade ideas. Another throwback to early radical print culture echoed in OWS newsies’ calls as they hawked fifty thousand copies of the *Occupied Wall Street Journal*’s first print edition. The newspaper cribbed prewar radical rhetoric when it linked the protest to the Boston Tea Party, history’s “biggest act of sabotage against a multinational corporation.”⁷⁸ The print edition showed a place remains for print media in social movements. Its founders shared their predecessors’ belief that the power of the press belongs to those who own one. “If we want people’s democracy then we’ve got to build a people’s media,” the site stated.⁷⁹

Similarly, the Internet’s blurring of the line between producer and audience may be greater than in the 1910s but is not unprecedented, as documented by *Industrial Worker*’s tips from hobos on the road and *ISR*’s calls for readers’ reports in the 1910s. Just as the IWW constructed its public image as powerful and menacing in *Solidarity* and *IW* imagery, Occupy constructed an empowering self-image on its Web site, as in its raised-fist logo. Assange’s synergistic role as messenger and activist has some parallels to socialist muckraker John Kenneth Turner’s role smuggling rifles for the Mexican revolutionaries he reported on for the *Appeal to Reason*. The editorial collective that ran the *Masses* shared the spirit of the OWS emphasis on collective action and decision-making. Fund-

raising is one social-movement media function in which the Internet surpasses the old radical periodicals. Oscar Ameringer would have envied the ease with which OWS raised more than \$50,000 on Kickstarter to finance printing two issues of the *OWSJ*. Social movement Web sites raise funds in contrast to draining them the way most radical newspapers did.

The most glaring difference from radical print culture is how online media collapse time and space. The public no longer needs a professional journalist like John Reed to reveal in the *Masses* what it was like to share a jail cell with strikers; hundreds of arrested Occupiers shared their accounts on Facebook and Twitter (most much less poignantly than Reed). Their participation in creating OWS media highlights social media's extraordinary capacity for interaction among members of a social movement. Another significant difference has more to do with philosophy than technology. Occupy's Declaration of Principles never mentions capitalism, although the culpability of the profits system wafts through its demands.

Viewed through the traditional social-movement lens, the weakest function of Occupy media appeared to be education about its creed, which critics charge is vague. The vagueness perhaps was intentional to avoid alienating any of the 99 percent it aimed to recruit. Another explanation is that a new kind of movement communication has emerged from social networking tools: "transmedia," which new media scholar Sasha Costanza-Chock explains reject a single unifying message in favor of "aggregation, curation, remix and circulation of rich media texts through networked movement formations."⁸⁰ While there appears to be no OWS online equivalent to *ISR*'s theoretical tracts, for example, OWS Web site users can link to a searchable run of almost every *ISR* number in the Open Library. Unlike the 1910s, however, no editor guides visitors through its vast virtual stacks.

Occupy's seemingly overnight cultivation of a strong global group identity was phenomenal but perhaps ephemeral. It will be a challenge to sustain. "We are the 99%" triumphed as its short-term catchphrase, but it assumes a bond among protesters that transcends race, gender, religion, nationality, and class. That assumption is as idealistic and probably as unrealistic as the earlier radicals' doomed expectation that European socialists would refuse to take up arms against workers of other nations during World War I. Occupy's diffuseness will make it tough to mobilize an amorphous constituency no more precisely defined than as a "people's movement." The IWW's global vision of "One Big Union" was arguably more comprehensive than the OWS's stated mission to "occupy public space; create a process to address the problems we face, and generate

solutions accessible to everyone.”⁸¹ Online media’s instantaneity also may thwart a long-term social movement, as its un-rootedness may work against development and continuity. A starker reminder of the obstacles social movements face no matter how high-tech their media occurred with the November 15, 2011, dismantling of Occupy Wall Street’s tent city by New York police in riot gear. Part of hegemony is the dominant powers’ ability to resort to force when sufficiently threatened, as further demonstrated by police violence against Occupiers in Oakland and elsewhere.⁸²

Occupy media did at least temporarily penetrate media hegemony.⁸³ Unlike a century before, numerous mainstream media critics critiqued negative news coverage (which revealed the continued need for counter-hegemonic media), including Comedy Central’s satirical *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, seen by millions.⁸⁴ Camera cell phones also enabled participants to immediately name-and-shame abusers such as pepper-spraying police in Davis, California.⁸⁵ Although *New York Times* media critic David Carr is among those who wondered what would happen to the leaderless Occupy movement once its tent cities came down, he believes Occupy left a “footprint” that will linger on the political landscape.⁸⁶ The OWS imperative on physically occupying public space reiterates a key limitation of social movement media: They are only a tool. People make the revolution.

Media always have been a part of revolution, and events in Egypt in 2013 demonstrated how much tougher it is to build a society than to dismantle it. The salient point is that online social-movement media are progeny of the century-old radical press. *Appeal to Reason*, *Mother Earth*, *Solidarity*, and similar journals were all communication tools that enabled disempowered groups to speak out, organize, and contest social injustice. Social-movement media change, but their song remains the same. At least in the case of radical media, Marshall McLuhan was wrong when he famously declared the medium is the message: what matters is the intrinsic human hunger for freedom and equality conveyed by radical media, from anarchist Albert Parson’s *Alarm* to #OccupyWallSt.

NOTES

Introduction

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110. "A Socialist Group in Congress," *Call*, May 20, 1914, 6.
111. "A Pointer for New York Socialists," *Call*, Sept. 26, 1913, 6.
112. "Most Class-Conscious Socialist Vote in History of Nation Will Total Approximately 900,000," *Call*, Nov. 7, 1912, 1; and "Working Class Vote Throughout Nation Climbing Resistlessly [sic] toward the One Million Mark," *Call*, Nov. 8, 1911, 1.
113. "The Need for Social Insurance," *Call*, May, 21, 1916, SM 5.
114. J. Louis Engdahl, "Romance in Journalism: From the *Chicago Socialist* to the *Daily Worker*," *Liberator* 6 (Oct. 1923): 16–17.
115. Nicholas Salvatore, *Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1982), 244.
116. Morris Hillquit to Board of Management, Mar. 13, 1911, box 1, WCPA.
117. Julius Gerber to H. Simpson, editor, no date, box 2, WCPA.
118. George Gordon to Board of Management, Sept. 9, 1908, box 1, WCPA.
119. Feigenbaum, "Ten Years," 29–30.
120. Elliott Shore, *Talkin' Socialism: J. A. Wayland and the Radical Press* (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1992), 224.
121. Morris Hillquit, "Six Years," *Call*, May 30, 1914, 8.
122. T. N. Fall to Julius Gerber, Oct. 21, 1908, and John Mullen to Comrades, Nov. 21, 1911, W. B. Kelsey to Board of Management, June 7, 1909, all in box 1, WCPA; Peter Collins to S. John Block, June 8, 1912, box 2, WCPA.
123. A. A. Heller to Julius Gerber, July 19, 1911, box 1, WCPA.
124. Julius Gerber to Comrade [Frank] McDonald, Feb. 25, 1911, box 1, WCPA.
125. George Gordon to Comrades of the Board, July 13, 1908, box 1, WCPA.

126. Daily *Call* Ways and Means Committee Account, June 9, 1908, "A Special Meeting," flier, July 15, 1908, and Unknown to Julius Gerber, Aug. 6, 1908, all in box 1, WCPA.

127. See "A Plain Talk to the *Call*'s Friends," *Call*, July 15, 1908, 6; and "A Word of Warning," *Call*, May 22, 1909, 6.

128. Feigenbaum, "Ten Years," 17. Stokes later bought \$2,500 of *Call* bonds. Robert D. Reynolds Jr., "The Millionaire Socialists: J. G. Phelps and His Circle of Friends" (PhD diss., Univ. of South Carolina, 1974), 351.

129. Board of Managers to Comrade, Nov. 3, 1908, box 1, WCPA.

130. "The Party and the *Call*," *Call*, Dec. 11, 1908, 6.

131. Feigenbaum, "Ten Years," 21. See also The *Call* Sustaining Fund, box 1, WCPA.

132. Report, Publications of the WCPA, WCPA.

133. W. W. Passage to Comrade, July 16, 1914, box 2, WCPA.

134. W. W. Passage to Comrade Solomon, July 15, 1914; see also S. John Block to Julius Gerber, July 22, 1914, "The *Call* Situation," no date, and William Feigenbaum to Comrades of the Board, Aug. 11, 1914, all in box 2, WCPA.

135. Employees to Board of Management, Feb. 23, 1909, box 1, WCPA.

136. Anna Maley to Board of Managers, Mar. 3, 1909, box 1, WCPA.

137. "What We Are and Why We Are," *Call*, May 30, 1908, 8.

138. "A Socialist Daily," *Wilshire's* 12 (Aug. 1908): 6.

139. "For the New Year," *Call*, Jan. 2, 1909, 6.

140. Secretary Julius Gerber[?] to Thomas Burke, secretary, Mar. 2, 1911, box 1, WCPA. See also Organizer to the Executive Committee and General Committee of Local New York, Socialist Party, Nov. 18, 1914, box 2, WCPA, and Alvin Huff to Secretary, Aug. 21, 1911, box 1, WCPA.

141. Organizer to the Executive Committee and General Committee, New York, Nov. 18, 1914, box 2, WCPA.

142. Alvin Huff to Secretary, Aug. 21, 1911, box 1, WCPA.

143. Algernon Lee *et al.* to the Workingmen's Cooperative Publishing Co., n/d, and L. B. Boudin to WCPA, both in box 2, WCPA.

144. See "The Advertiser and the Editor," *Call*, Feb. 3, 1909, 6.

145. Ben Hanford to Julius Irving, June 19, 1908, and N. S. Reichenthal to Julius Gerber, Sept. 27, 1908, both in box 1, WCPA.

146. J. Chant Lipes to [?], Apr. 13, 1909, box 1, WCPA.

147. Leon Malkiel to Board of Management, Mar. 7, 1913, box 2, WCPA.

148. "Discuss Problems of Socialist Press," *Call*, Dec. 21, 1912, 2.

149. Fred Arland to Julius Gerber, Apr. 24, 1912, William [Arland?] to Julius Gerber, May 20, 1912, and Julius Gerber to William Arland, June 19, 1912, all in box 2, WCPA. See also "The Socialist Party and Religion," *Call*, July 30, 1912, 6; and Alex Rosen to Board of Managers, Apr. 24, 1908, and Julius Gerber to Alexander Rosen, May 2, 1909, both in box 1, WCPA.

150. Julius Gerber to Frank McDonald, July 15, 1913, box 2, WCPA.

151. W. W. Passage to Frank McDonald, Sept. 18, 1913, box 2, WCPA. Unhappy readers were not unique to the *Call*. "They won't let the editors alone," *Forward* editor Abraham Cahan complained. "Each one seems to think that he alone can save the country and if a letter he sends to the paper for some reason is not printed, the editor might as well enter that man's name on his list of enemies." "Discuss Problems of Socialist Press," *Call*, Dec. 21, 1912, 2.

152. "Call to Be Greatest Paper on Continent, Warren Tells Throng," *Call*, Feb. 1, 1915, 1, 2.

153. See Elmer Beck, "Autopsy of a Labor Daily: *The Milwaukee Leader*," *Journalism Monographs* 16 (Aug. 1970); Elmer Axel Beck, *The Sewer Socialists: A History of the Socialist Party of Wisconsin, 1897-1940* (Fennimore, Wisc.: Westburg Associates Publishers, 1982); Nicholas Michael Ciaccio, "Because It Had to Be: *The Milwaukee Leader*, Socialism and the First World War" (senior honors thesis, Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2005); and Thomas Gavett, *Development of the Labor Movement in Milwaukee*

(Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1965).

154. John Work, "The Leader among Labor Dailies," *Labor Age* 12 (Oct. 1923): 10.
155. "The Leader Is Denied Mails by Dockery," *Milwaukee Leader*, Oct. 3, 1917, 1.
156. Oscar Ameringer, *If You Don't Weaken: The Autobiography of Oscar Ameringer*, 2d ed., (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 296.
157. Work, "Leader," 10.
158. Joseph Cohen, "The Socialist Press," *PW* 5 (July 1911): 6.
159. Sally M. Miller, *Victor Berger and the Promise of Constructive Socialism, 1910–1920* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1973) 38, 86n1.
160. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, July 17, 1929, 3. See also "Labor Press Is Hopeful of Berger," *Call*, Nov. 17, 1910, 4.
161. See Jon Bekken, "'This Paper Is Owned by Many Thousands of Workingmen and Women': Contradictions of a Socialist Daily," *American Journalism* 10 (Winter–Spring 1993): 61–83.
162. Robert Huston, "A. M. Simons and the American Socialist Movement" (PhD diss., Univ. of Wisconsin, 1965), 175.
163. A. M. Simons, "Starting a Daily Socialist Paper," *ISR* 7 (Dec. 1906): 328.
164. *Ibid.*, 329, 300.
165. Huston, "A. M. Simons," 175.
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167. Bekken, "'This Paper Is Owned by Many Thousands of Workingmen and Women,'" 72.
168. Reynolds, "Millionaire Socialists," 220; and Huston, "A. M. Simons," 186.
169. J. Louis Engdahl, "Romance in Journalism: From the *Chicago Socialist* to the *Daily Worker*," *Liberator* 6 (Oct. 1923): 16–17.
170. *Ibid.*, 17. See also A Union Man, "The Strike on Chicago Papers," *ISR* 13 (July 1912): 12–15.
171. Phillips Russell, "The Newspaper War in Chicago," *ISR* 13 (July 1912): 7–11. See also Philip Taft, "The Limits of Labor Unity: The Chicago Newspaper Strike of 1912," *Labor History* 19, no. 1 (1978): 100–129.
172. Gretchen Kreuter and Kent Kreuter, *An American Dissenter: The Life of Algie Martin Simons 1870–1950* (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1969), 138n55.
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174. Ira Kipnis, *The American Socialist Movement, 1897–1912* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1952), 252.
175. Engdahl, "Romance in Journalism," 17; editorial, "Frenzied Finance in the Socialist Party," *ISR* 14 (Jan. 1913): 562.
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2. J. Anthony Lukas, *Big Trouble: A Murder in a Small Western Town Sets Off a Struggle for the Soul of America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 423.
3. Wayne Broehl Jr., *The Molly Maguires* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1983), 164.
4. John Kasson, "Commentary on 'The Body' as a Useful Category of Working-Class History," *Labor Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 4 (Summer 2007): 45.
5. George Shoaf, *Fighting for Freedom* (Kansas City, Mo.: Simplified Economics [1953]), 62.
6. "Officers of Western Federation Kidnapped," *Appeal*, Feb. 24, 1906, 1; "'Governors of Colorado and Idaho the Real Criminals,'" and "Kidnaping [sic] Declared Legal," both in *Appeal*, Dec. 8, 1906, 1.

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8. "Close Your Ranks!" *Wilshire's* 10 (Apr. 1906): 14.
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10. Editorial, "An Exhibition of Solidarity," *ISR* 10 (Apr. 1906): 623–24.
11. "Moyer-Haywood Parade, New York, May 4," *Wilshire's* 11 (June 1907): 8.
12. "Strike to Set Them Free," *Wilshire's* 10 (Apr. 1906): 5. See also editorial, "The General Strike," *ISR* 6 (June 1906): 746–48.
13. "The Prisoners in the Idaho Jail," *Wilshire's* 10 (May 1906): 16. See also Joseph Wanhope, "The Haywood-Moyer Outrage," *Wilshire's* 10 (Apr. 1906): 5, 8; and "Wanhope's Story of the Idaho Outrage," *Wilshire's* 10 (May 1906): 4–5, 15–16.
14. Shoaf, *Fighting for Freedom*, 96.
15. George Shoaf, "... The Mystery of Steunenberg's Death ...," *Appeal*, Mar. 10, 1906, 6. See also "Unwinding the Tangled Skein," *Appeal*, Mar. 17, 1906, 1; "The Conspiracy Unfolds," *Appeal*, Mar. 23, 1906, 1; and "Judicial Murder Planned," *Appeal*, Feb. 16, 1907, 1.
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19. See Jon Bekken, "'These Great and Dangerous Powers': Postal Censorship of the Press," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 15 (Winter 1991): 55–71.
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23. "Mr. Madden vs. *Appeal* Army," *Appeal*, Nov. 16, 1901, 1.
24. "The Appeal Submits Its Case," *Appeal*, Nov. 30, 1901, 1.
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26. Upton Sinclair, "Climax of Long Series of Persecutions," *Appeal*, Nov. 30, 1907, 1. See also George Brewer, *The Fighting Editor; or, Warren and the Appeal* (Girard, Kans.: The Author, 1910), 62–65.
27. See for example, Eugene Debs, "Roosevelt and His Regime," *Appeal*, Apr. 20, 1907, 1; untitled illustration, *Appeal*, Apr. 20, 1907, 1; *The Platform*, *Appeal*, Apr. 27, 1907, 3; and *Upholders of Law in Their True Colors as Holdups and Outlaws*, *Appeal*, May 4, 1907, 4.
28. "The *Appeal* Under Fire!" *Appeal*, Apr. 14, 1906, 1; "The *Appeal* Wins!" *Appeal*, June 16, 1906, 1; and England, *Story of the Appeal*, 85–86.
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31. David Paul Nord, "The *Appeal* to Reason and American Socialism, 1901–1920," *Kansas History* 1 (Summer 1975): 80. Stories promoting the *Appeal* rose to 15.4 percent of editorial content after 1912.
32. See Clarence Darrow, *The Story of My Life* (New York: Da Capo, 1996), 52–54.
33. See "Do We Need a 'Labor Party'?" *ISR* 9 (Apr. 1909): 801; and "Politics and the Proletariat," *ISR* 9 (Dec. 1908): 464–65.
34. Quoted in Lukas, *Big Trouble*, 666.
35. "Orchard's Bubba-Mayses," *Forverts*, June 6, 1907, 1.
36. See Ernest Untermann, "In the Enemy's Land," *Wilshire's* 10 (June 1907): 7; Margherita Arlina Hamm, "Heroines of the Haywood Trial," *Wilshire's* 11 (July 1907): 10; John McMahon, "Haywood's Trial a Historic Landmark," *Wilshire's* 11 (July 1907): 6–7, 13; photograph, *Wilshire's* 11 (Aug. 1907): cover; "Haywood Acquitted," *Wilshire's* 11 (Aug. 1907): 5; Margherita Hamm, "The State's Rebuttal at Boise," *Wilshire's* 11 (Aug. 1907): 23; and John McMahon, "Aftermath of the Haywood Trial," *Wilshire's* 11 (Sept. 1907): 11.

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38. Robert Huston, "A. M. Simons and the American Socialist Movement" (PhD diss., Univ. of Wisconsin, 1965), 189.
39. H. G. Wilshire to J. A. Wayland, May 15, 1906, fol. 35, H-JC.
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42. John McMahon, "Snapshots at the Trial," *Wilshire's* 11 (July 1907): 19.
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44. Lukas, *Big Trouble*, 517.
45. "\$1,000 Reward!" *Appeal*, Jan. 12, 1907, 1.
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47. "The Appeal at Bar," *Appeal*, June 1, 1907, 1.
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49. "Red Special on the Way," *Appeal*, Sept. 5, 1908, 2; and Shore, *Talkin' Socialism*, 199.
50. "Defeated but Not Conquered," and "Warren Convicted by a Packed Jury," both in *Appeal*, May 15, 1909, 1.
51. *Warren v. United States*, 183 Fed. 718 (1910); and George Shoaf to Fred Warren, Nov. 24, 1910, fol. 53, J-HC.
52. Fred Warren, "1837—Seventy Years: A Parallel—1907," *Appeal*, Nov. 23, 1907, 1.
53. See *Appeal* illustrations, May 26, 1906, 4; Nov. 2, 1907, 1; and Jan. 20, 1912, 2.
54. Upton Sinclair, "The Warren Defenders," *Appeal*, June 19, 1909, 1.
55. Fred Warren, "Crime and Horrors in a Federal Prison," *Appeal*, Apr. 15, 1911, 1; "The Leavenworth Case," *Appeal*, Apr. 29, 1911, 1; "Driven to Insanity and Death," *Appeal*, May 20, 1911, 2; "McClaghry, the Double Dealer," *Appeal*, May 27, 1911, 2; "Graft at Leavenworth," *Appeal*, June 10, 1911, 2; and "The McClaghry Graft," *Appeal*, July 8, 1911, 2.
56. "Cry of Revolt Sounded by Debs," *Call*, Jan. 4, 1911, 4. See also "Fred Warren's Crime," *Call*, Nov. 23, 1910, 6; "One Law for the Rich, Another for the Poor," *Call*, Nov. 22, 1910, 6; Upton Sinclair, "Rally to the Appeal!" *Call*, Nov. 25, 1911, 6; and "Warren Must Work at Hard Labor in Jail," *Call*, Nov. 26, 1910, 1.
57. "Observations and Comments," *ME* 4 (July 1909): 34–35.
58. Editorial, "The Appeal to Reason and the Federal Courts," *ISR* 10 (Mar. 1910): 839–40. See also "Fred D. Warren's Sentence Affirmed," and "One Law for the Rich, Another for the Poor," both in *Call*, Nov. 22, 1910, 1, 6; and "The Case of Fred D. Warren," *PW* 4 (July 1910): 7.
59. Editorial, "Fred Warren Goes to Jail," *ISR* 11 (Jan. 1911): 427–28.
60. George Shoaf, "The Case of Fred Warren," *PW* 4 (July 1910): 7. See also Upton Sinclair, poem, "The Red Flag," *PW* 3 (Aug. 1909): 6; and "The McNamara Case," *PW* 5 (June 1911): 8.
61. "The Appeal's Fight Is Our Fight," *Wilshire's* 11 (July 1907): 5.
62. J. B. Walker to Fred Warren, Feb. 17, 1911, fol. 56, J-HC.
63. Upton Sinclair, "Climax of Long Series of Persecutions," *Appeal*, Nov. 30, 1907, 1.
64. "Personal to Detective Burns," *Appeal*, Sept. 1916, 1911, 1.
65. Floyd Gibbons, "A Fight to a Finish," *ISR* 15 (Aug. 1914): 3, 74.
66. Jack Britt Gearity, "The New Castle Free Press Fight," *ISR* 12 (Aug. 1911): 97–99. See also "Persecution of the Free Press," *Solidarity*, Mar. 19, 1910, 2; "The Labor Press in Danger," *Solidarity*, May

14, 1910, 2; and editorial, "Fight for Freedom of the Press," *Call*, May 15, 1910, 8. In another Pennsylvania case, the socialist editor of *Justice* in Pittsburgh was jailed for libel. *Call*, May 15, 1911, 1.

67. Fred Warren, "The Free Press Fight at New Castle, Pa.," *ISR* 11 (July 1910): 34–36. Authorities later found editors Frank Hartman, Charles McKeever, and S. L. Flanagan in contempt of court. See also "Arizona Labor Editor Jailed," *Call*, July 26, 1910, 5; and "Fined for Selling Socialist Papers," *Call*, July 6, 1910, 1.

68. "Wanted to Hang Kidnapped Editor," *Call*, Apr. 10, 1912, 1.

69. "'Free Press' in San Diego," *IW*, May 23, 1912, 3.

70. Alexander Scott, "What the Reds Are Doing in Paterson," *ISR* 13 (June 1913): 852–56.

71. "From 1 to 15 Years for Socialist Editor," *Call*, June 7, 1913, 1; "Will You Allow Scott to Be Imprisoned?" *Call*, Oct. 8, 1913, 6; and "Scott—to Go Free, Is Decision," *Call*, Apr. 21, 1914, 1. See also "'Seditious Libel' in New Jersey," *Solidarity*, June 21, 1913, 2; "Press Freedom," *Solidarity*, July 14, 1913, 1; and Linda Cobb-Reilly, "Aliens and Alien Ideas: The Suppression of Anarchists and the Anarchist Press in America, 1901–1914," *Journalism History* 15 (Summer–Autumn 1988): 56.

72. Henry Tichenor, "Why the Boodlers Pay Billy Sunday Big Money," *Melting Pot* 2 (Aug. 1914): 3–5.

73. Irvin Wyllie, "The Socialist Press and the Libel Laws: A Case Study," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 4 (Summer 1952): 73.

74. See Kate Richards O'Hare, "Why Are They Silent?" *Rip-Saw* 10 (June 1913): 2–3, 10, 13.

75. Wyllie, "Socialist Press and the Libel Laws," 77.

76. Ralph Chaplin, "Violence in West Virginia," *ISR* 13 (Apr. 1913): 799. See David Corbin, *The Socialist and Labor Star, 1912–1915* (Huntington, W.Va.: Appalachian Movement Press, 1951).

77. W. H. Thompson, "How a Victory Was Turned into a Settlement," *ISR* 14 (July 1913): 12–17.

78. Untitled, and "Labor Argus Suppressed Outside Military Zone," both in *Appeal*, May 10, 1913; and "An Imprisoned Editor," *Appeal*, May 23, 1913, 1.

79. William Christopher Walker, "John Kenneth Turner: Socialist Writer for the *Appeal to Reason*" (MA thesis, Pittsburg State Univ., 1981), 2, 8.

80. George Shoaf to Fred Warren, [circa 1910], fol. 48, JAWC.

81. John Kenneth Turner to Fred Warren, Nov. 13, 1912, fol. 72, H-JC.

82. John Kenneth Turner to Fred Warren, Apr. 17, 18, 1913, fol. 100, H-JC.

83. "J. K. Turner to Write of West Virginia," *Appeal*, Apr. 26, 1913, 1. See also "Meaning of Governor Hatfield's Military Dictatorship," *Appeal*, May 10, 1913, 1; John Kenneth Turner, "Conditions More Appalling than in Barbarous Mexico," *Appeal*, May 17, 1913, 1; "Unmasking the Villains," *Appeal*, May 24, 1913, 1; "Crimes of a Private Army," *Appeal*, May 31, 1913, 1; and "Crimes of a Military Rule," *Appeal*, June 7, 1913, 1. Turner also complained to Warren about his editing and cuts to his copy. J. K. Turner to Fred Warren, May 8, 1913, fol. 101, H-JC.

84. [John Kenneth Turner] to Fred Warren, Apr. 10, 1913, fol. 99, H-JC.

85. John Kenneth Turner to Fred Warren, Apr. 18, 1913, fol. 100, H-JC.

86. John Kenneth Turner to Fred Warren, Apr. 17, 1913, fol. 100, H-JC.

87. See Mary Harris Jones, *The Autobiography of Mother Jones* (1925; repr., Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2005).

88. See M. B. Tonn, "Militant Motherhood: Labor's Mother Mary Harris Jones," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 82 (Feb. 1996): 1–21.

89. Leonard Abbott, "The Incarnation of Labor's Struggles," and Mary Field, "She Stirreth Up the People," both in *Everyman* 10 (Apr. May 1914): 5, 8–11.

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91. "May Day and Mother Jones," *Appeal*, Apr. 26, 1913, 1.

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93. See also "On the Strike Field," *ISR* 13 (Mar. 1913): 647–54.

94. Art Young, "Mother Jones: Come on, You Hell-hounds," *ISR* 14 (Mar. 1914): 516. See also

illustration, *ISR* 14 (Feb. 1914): 462; "The Mother of Fighting Men," *Call*, May 27, 1913, 3; illustration, Ryan Walker, *Comrade* (Nov. 1902): 28; "Soldiers Attack Helpless Women," *Appeal*, Apr. 4, 1914, 1; "Mother Jones Sends Thrilling Message to the *Appeal* Army," *Appeal*, Aug. 8, 1914, 1.

95. A Paint Creek Miner, "Mother Jones," *ISR* 14 (Apr. 1914): 605.

96. "Trying Mother Jones Before a Military Commission," *Appeal*, Mar. 22, 1913, 1.

97. John Kenneth Turner to Fred Warren, Apr. 18, 1913, fol. 100, H-JC. See also Pat Creech Scholten, "The Old Mother and Her Army: The Agitative Strategies of Mary Harris Jones," *West Virginia History* 40 (Summer 1979): 365–74.

98. *Appeal*, Apr. 11, 1914, 1.

99. Untitled, *Appeal*, May 23, 1913, 1.

100. John Kenneth Turner to Fred Warren, Apr. 17, 1913, fol. 100, H-JC.

101. Editorial, "The Worst Monopoly," and Art Young, *Poisoned at the Source*, both in *Masses* 4 (July 1913): 6.

102. "Indicted for Criminal Libel," *Masses* 5 (Jan. 1914): 3.

103. See "The Associated Press," and Art Young, "The A.P. And the Masses Editors," *Masses* 5 (Apr. 1914): 18–19, 3; Art Young, "Madam, You Dropped Something!" *Masses* 8 (Feb. 1916): 17; Alex Baskin, "Introduction: *The Masses*: America's Journal of Art, Satire and Socialism," in *The Masses*, reprint ed. (Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus Reprinting, 1980): x–xi; Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), 467–73; and Rebecca Zurier, *Art for The Masses: A Radical Magazine and Its Graphics, 1911–1917* (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1988), 44–45.

104. Ralph Chaplin, *Wobbly: The Rough-and-Tumble Story of an American Radical* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1948), 120.

105. *Ibid.*, 127–28. See also W. H. Thompson, "How a Victory Was Turned into 'Settlement' in West Virginia," *ISR* 14 (July 1913): 12–17.

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107. "Strikers Tortured by John D's Hirelings," *Appeal*, Mar. 28, 1914, 1; and "Soldiers Attack Helpless Women," *Appeal*, Apr. 4, 1914, 1.

108. Douglas Martelle, *Blood Passion: The Ludlow Massacre and Class War in the American West* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2008), 2.

109. "Even Capitalist Newspapers Denounce Bloody Slaughter of Colorado Miners," *Call*, Apr. 24, 1914, 2.

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112. Stephen Hess and Sandy Northrop, *Drawn and Quartered: The History of American Political Cartoons* (Montgomery, Ala.: Elliott & Clark, 1996), 83.

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115. See John Adler and Draper Hill, *Doomed by Cartoon: How Cartoonist Thomas Nast and the New York Times Brought Down Boss Tweed and His Ring of Thieves* (Garden City, N.J.: Morgan James, 2008).

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118. Hess and Northrop, *Drawn and Quartered*, 67. See also "Hunting the Octopus," *Harper's Weekly* 44 (Oct. 6, 1900): 1.

119. Back cover, "The Socialist Leaven Already Is Working," publications of the New York *Call* folder, WCPA.

120. "Hell—Doesn't It Look Natural," *Rip-Saw* 10 (Nov. 1913): cover.

121. Untitled, *Appeal*, Oct. 10, 1903, 6. See also *Labor Day*, *Mother Earth* 4 (Sept. 1909): 209; *Slaves of Steel*, *ISR* 11 (Aug. 1910): 75; *Slavery Is the Pillar of the Law*, *IW*, July 29, 1909, 1; Robert Minor, *The Golden Rule*, *Blast* 2 (Jan. 22, 1916): cover; and Robert Minor, *If Only He Would*, *Blast* 2 (Jan. 29, 1916): cover.

122. See Ryan Walker, *New Adventures of Henry Dubb*, pamphlet, (Chicago: Socialist Party, 1915), accessed Mar. 10, 2011, http://www.marxists.org/subject/art/visual_arts/satire/walker/index.htm.

123. Fred Warren to George Goebels, June 9, 1906, fol. 35, H-JC.

124. Bruce Calvert, "Ryan Walker, Cartoonist and Humanist," *Call*, Dec. 12, 1915, SM7–8. See also "Ryan Walker and His Funny Pen," *Call*, Dec. 25, 1916, 1.

125. Ryan Walker, "Waiting!" *Seattle Socialist*, Aug. 18, 1906, 1.

126. Ryan Walker to [Louie Kopelin?] Sept. 3 [1912?], fol. 63, H-JC (emphasis in original).

127. Fred Warren to Ryan Walker, Jan. 14, 1914, fol. 104, H-JC.

128. Ryan Walker to Fred Warren, Jan. 9, 1914; and Warren to Walker, Jan. 14, 1914, both fol. 104, H-JC.

129. "Cartoons by Robt. Minor in the N.Y. *Call*," *Rip-Saw* 12 (July 1915): 3.

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133. "Robert Minor," *ISR* 17 (July 1916): 47; and "Cartoons by Robt. Minor in the N.Y. *Call*," *Rip-Saw* 12 (July 1915): 3.

134. Quoted in Everette E. Dennis and Melvin L. Dennis, "100 Years of Political Cartooning," *Journalism History* 1 (Spring 1974): 7. Kirby, who won the first Pulitzer Prize for cartooning in 1922, contributed cartoons to *Harper's Weekly*, the *New York Post*, and the *New York World*.

135. "What Is the Matter with Magazine Art?" *Masses* 6 (Dec. 1914): 14.

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137. Untitled, *Appeal*, Oct. 24, 1903, 6. See also *Tickled to Death*, *Wilshire's* 11 (Aug. 1907): cover.

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141. *Behold the Child*, *Call*, Oct. 27, 1908, 6. See also *Crucified*, *Call*, Jan. 30, 1909, 1; *Crucified*, *ISR* 14 (June 1914): 716; and *Rest Indeed*, *Masses* 4 (Oct. 1913): 11.

142. Untitled, *Rip-Saw* 11 (Mar. 1914): 27.

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37. Ernest Untermann to National Executive Committee, Nov. 9, 1911, fol. 28, H-JFP.
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57. “The Horrors and Outrages of the Congo in Spokane,” *IW*, Feb. 25, 1910, 4.
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75. I. M. Robbins, "The Economic Aspects of the Negro Problem," *ISR* 8 (Feb. 1908): 480–88, 9 (Sept. 1908): 168, 10 (June 1910): 1114–15, 1117.
76. *ISR* 9 (June 1909): 985–94.
77. Jeffrey Perry, introduction to *A Hubert Harrison Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Perry (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 2001), 2. See also Jeffrey Perry, *Hubert Harrison: The Voice of Harlem Radicalism, 1883–1917* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2010).
78. See "The Negro and Socialism: I—The Negro Problem Stated," *Call*, Nov. 28, 1911, 6; "Race Prejudice—II," *Call*, Dec. 4, 1911, 6; "The Duty of the Socialist Party," *Call*, Dec. 13, 1911, 6; "How to Do It—and How Not," *Call*, Dec. 16, 1911, 6; and "Summary and Conclusion," *Call*, Dec. 26, 1911, 6.
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83. Robert Lowie, "The Inferior Races: From an Anthropologist's Point of View," *New Review* 1 (Dec. 1913): 934–42; Robert Lowie, "Some Recent Expressions on Racial Inferiority," *New Review* 2 (Sept. 1914): 542–46; Robert Lowie, "Inequality of Races," *New Review* 4 (May 1916): 166; and Mary White Ovington, "The Status of the Negro in the United States," *New Review* 1 (Sept. 1913): 747–48. See also "What Is the Negro Question?" *New Review* 2 (May 1914): 303–6; and Paul Kennaday, "New Propaganda of Race Hatred," *New Review* 3 (May 1, 1915): 1–2.
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Question, *New Review* 2 (Mar. 1914): 178–80.

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87. W. E. B. Du Bois, "A Field for Socialists," *New Review* 1 (Jan. 11, 1913): 57. See also W. E. B. Du Bois, "Another Study in Black," *New Review* 2 (July 1914): 410–14.
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92. Quoted in Foner, "IWW and the Black Worker," 47.
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101. Charles Vail, "The Negro Problem," *ISR* 1 (Feb. 1901): 467.
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112. Green, "Brotherhood of Timber Workers," 168.
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21. "Modesty," *ME* 1 (Aug. 1906): 30–34; and "What Is Morality?" *ME* 1 (Nov. 1906): 21.
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30. Margaret Sanger, "To My Friends," *ME* 10 (Feb. 1916): 405.
31. Candace Serena Falk, *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1990), 238; and Chesler, *Woman of Valor*, 142; "The Persecution of Margaret Sanger," *ME* 9 (Nov. 1914): 296–97; untitled, *ME* 11 (Jan. 1916): 365; "The Sanger Case," *ME* 9 (Feb. 1915): 379–80; and "The Conviction of William Sanger," *ME* 10 (Oct. 1915): 268.
32. Emma Goldman, "Limitation of Offspring," *ME* 10 (July 1915): 192. See also Margaret Sanger, "Not Guilty!" *ME* 11 (Jan. 1916): 363–65; and Stansell, *American Bohemians*, 237.
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34. See also "A Protest of Forty San Francisco Women," *ME* 11 (May 1916): 521–22; "Emma Goldman in Jail," *ME* 11 (May 1916): 523–24; "The Free Speech and Birth Control Dinner," *ME* 11 (May 1916): 518–20; "Birth Control Demonstration in Union Square," *ME* 11 (June 1916): 525; and Emma Goldman, "Again the Birth Control Agitation," *ME* 11 (Nov. 1916): 669–71.
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36. Emma Goldman, "An Urgent Appeal to My Friends," *ME* 11 (Apr. 1916): 450–51.
37. "Is the Truth Obscene?" *Masses* 6 (Mar. 1915): 5–6. See also "Knowledge and Revolution," *Masses* 5 (May 1914): 1; "Margaret Sanger," *Masses* 5 (Nov. 1914): 20; and *What Every Young Woman Ought to Have Known*, *Masses* 6 (Apr. 1915): 23.
38. Sam Schmalhausen, "Motherhood by Coercion," *Call*, May 2, 1915, SM112.
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40. "Billie Sanger and Anthony Comstock," *ISR* 15 (Apr. 1915): 620. See also "Observations and Comments," *ME* 10 (Apr. 1915): 69; "Is William Sanger to Go to Jail?" *Masses* 6 (Sept. 1915): 1; and "Birth Control Propaganda," *Blast* 1 (Mar. 15, 1916): 6.
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42. "Successful Law-Breaking," *Masses* 8 (Jan. 1917): 16–17.
43. Inspector E. Honvery to New York Inspector in Charge, July 7, 1917, file 42090, box 56, entry 36, RPOD. The file is full of correspondence among postal officials debating whether to prosecute Sanger.

44. Emma Goldman, "Victims of Morality," *ME* 8 (Feb. 1913): 23. See also "Observations and Comments," *ME* 4 (July 1909): 133; and "Marriage and the Home," *ME* 1 (Apr. 1906): 26.
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47. *The Vice Clean-Up*, *Blast* 2 (Feb. 15, 1917): cover. See also *The Women's Night Court*, *Masses* 4 (Aug. 1913): 10–11; and Rebecca Zurier, *Art for The Masses: A Radical Magazine and Its Graphics, 1911–1917* (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1988), 81.
48. "Two Victims of Society," *IW*, Jan. 26, 1911, 1. See also illustration, *The Real White Slaver*, *Solidarity*, Jan. 3, 1914, 7; and "Prostitution and Wage Slavery," *Solidarity*, Sept. 23, 1916, 3.
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57. "Woman's Department," *Coming Nation*, Feb. 4, 1899, 3.
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82. See "Why the *Socialist Woman* Comes Into Existence," *SW* 1 (June 1907): 4; "Women Must Conquer through Knowledge," *SW* 1 (Aug. 1907): 6; "Sexual Subjugation," *SW* 1 (Aug. 1907): 3; "What Is the Woman Question?" *PW* 2 (Mar. 1909): 4–5; "The Dangers of Exclusive Masculinism," *SW* 2 (July 1908): 3; "Woman, the World Is Waiting for You," *SW* 1 (May 1908): 9; and "Is the American Family to Die?" *PW* 2 (Mar. 1909): 6.
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32. John Reed, "The Worst Thing in Europe," *Masses* 6 (Mar. 1915): 17.
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36. *Masses* 7 (Dec. 1915): 19. See also "Editorial," *Masses* 7 (Mar. 1916): 16.
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64. "The Messenger," reprinted in *Messenger*, Aug. 1919, 29.
65. Oscar Ameringer, *If You Don't Weaken: The Autobiography of Oscar Ameringer*, 2d ed., (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 322.
66. Albert Sidney Burleson to Publisher and Editor, World Building, Oct. 3, 1917, file "Excluding Publications from the Mail," box 1, entry 47, RPOD.
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69. "War Activities of the United States Post Office," file B-588, box 60, entry 40, RPOD.
70. Max Eastman, "The Post Office Censorship," *Masses* 9 (Sept. 1917): 24.
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72. Marvin Schick, *Learned Hand's Court* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1970), 177–78.
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74. Charles W. Wood, "Our Crimson Sin," *Masses* 9 (Sept. 1917): 26.
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78. Burleson to John Moon, July 21, 1917, file "Excluding Publications from the Mail," box 1, entry 47, RPOD.
79. "Would Investigate P.O. Department," *World*, July 1, 1917, n.p.
80. Burleson to Senator John Bankhead, Aug. 21, 1917, "Exclusion of Second-Class Mail Matter, etc., Under the Espionage Act," file "Excluding Publications from the Mail," box 1, entry 47, RPOD.
81. Woodrow Wilson to Max Eastman, Sept. 18, 1917, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, ed. Arthur Link, vol. 44, *Aug. 21–Nov. 10, 1917* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983), 210–11.
82. "War Activities of the United States Post Office." See also "List of Newspapers and Publications Which Have Been Declared Nonmailable by the Post Office Department Under Section 19, Trading with the Enemies Act, and Espionage Act," file B-350, box 60, entry 40, RPOD.
83. "War Activities of the United States Post Office."
84. File, "List, Permit Papers," box 3, entry 47, RPOD.
85. The July 1917 *Mother Earth* devoted thirty-four pages to trial coverage, including full text of the defendants' long speeches.
86. "The Immutable," *ME* 12 (July 1917): 167.
87. Emma Goldman, *Living My Life*, vol. 1 (New York: Knopf, 1931), 642.

88. Leonard Abbott, "The War Hysteria and Our Protest," *ME* 11 (Aug. 1917): 202. See also "Observations and Comments," *ME* 12 (Aug. 1917): 194–96.
89. "A Letter to Pearson's Subscribers," *Masses* 9 (Sept. 1917): 41.
90. The raids were named after their overseer, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer. See Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1955).
91. Nancy Caldwell Sorel, "J. Edgar Hoover and Emma Goldman," *Atlantic Monthly* 127 (Jan. 1993): 105.
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93. "To Our Readers," *Social Revolution*, Aug. 1917, 1.
94. Allen Ruff, *We Called Each Other Comrade: Charles H. Kerr and Company, Radical Publishers* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1997), 194.
95. See Ericka Kuhlman, "Women's Ways in War": The Feminist Pacifism of the New York City Woman's Peace Party," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 18 (Spring 1997): 80–100.
96. C. Vann Woodward, *Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 395–96. Burleson listed the *Jeffersonian* alongside the *Masses* as leading violators of the act.
97. Third Assistant Postmaster General WCW to The Solicitor, Jan. [?] 1918, file 47606, box 44, entry 40, RPOD. Additionally, telegrams and letters announcing search warrants at post offices in search of first-class letters suspected of violating the Espionage Act fill seven boxes at the National Archives. Many letters were opened, inspected, and held while the post office ruled on them. See file 47596, boxes 37–43, entry 40, RPOD.
98. Sally M. Miller, *Victor Berger and the Promise of Constructive Socialism, 1910–1920* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1973), 195.
99. "Punishment for the Disloyal," *New York Times*, Apr. 3, 1918, 12.
100. John Stevens, "Press and Community Toleration: Wisconsin in World War I," *Journalism Quarterly* 46 (Summer 1969): 256.
101. F. E. Van Cleave to Postmaster General, Apr. 21, 1916, file 45217, box 59, entry 36, RPOD.
102. "The Freedom of Speech, the Freedom of the Press, and the Right to Public Assembly in Times of War," file 49307, box 132, entry 40, RPOD.
103. William Maxwell Jr. of Bureau M-1 to William Lamar, Feb. 14, 1918, file 47748, box 78, entry 40, RPOD.
104. William Maxwell Jr. to William Lamar, Apr. 29, 1918, file 47748, box 78, entry 40, RPOD.
105. Quoted in Miller, *Victor Berger*, 119.
106. "Phases of the European War," *Leader*, Sept. 5, 1914, 6.
107. Miller, *Victor Berger*, 182.
108. "National Service," *Leader*, Jan. 11, 1916, 10.
109. Victor Berger, *The Voice and Pen of Victor L. Berger: Congressional Speeches and Editorials* (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Leader, 1929), 70.
110. Ameringer, *If You Don't Weaken*, 316, 306.
111. Edward J. Muzik, "Victor L. Berger: Congress and the Red Scare," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 47 (Summer 1964): 311.
112. *Ibid.*, 315–16.
113. "Cases of International Importance," *IW*, Nov. 3, 1917, 2. See Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Worker of the World*, 2d ed. (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1988), 406, 431–32.
114. William Maxwell to Solicitor, Dec. 14, 1917, file 47578, box 33, entry 40, RPOD.
115. "A Scissorbill Bill," *IW*, Aug. 18, 1917, 2.
116. "Were You Drafted?" *Solidarity*, July 28, 1917, 8.
117. "National Anthem," *Solidarity*, Apr. 14, 1917, 1.
118. Editorial, "An Explanation," *Solidarity*, Sept. 22, 1917, 2; and Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 407. See

also John Lindquist and James Fraser, "A Sociological Interpretation of the Bisbee Deportation," *Pacific Historical Review* 37 (Nov. 1968): 421n105.

119. "Behind the Jail Bars," *IW*, Oct. 20, 1917, 4; and "Attorney Advises Surrender," *IW*, Dec. 1, 1917, 1.

120. *IW*, Nov. 10, 1917, 4.

121. "Industrial Worker Answers to Charges," *IW*, Apr. 20, 1918, 1. See William Haywood, *The Autobiography of Big Bill Haywood* (New York: International Publishers, 1929), 290–325; Ralph Chaplin, *Wobbly: The Rough-and-Tumble Story of an American Radical* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1948), 219–83; Richard Brazier, "The Mass IWW Trial of 1918: A Retrospect," *Labor History* 7 (Spring 1966), 178–92; John Reed and Art Young, "The Social Revolution in Court," *Liberator* 1 (Sept. 1918); Preston, *Aliens and Dissenters*, 118–51; Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 423–44; Philip Foner, *Labor and World War I*: vol. 7 of *History of the Labor Movement in the United States* (New York: International Press, 1987), 292–314; Philip Taft, "The Federal Trials of the IWW," *Labor History* 3 (Winter 1962): 52–65; and Philip S. Foner, "United States of America vs. Wm. D. Haywood et al.: The IWW Indictment," *Labor History* 11 (Fall 1970): 500–530.

122. "The IWW Trial at Chicago," *Trial Bulletin*, May 13, 1918, 1.

123. Jon Bekken, "Los Trabajadores Industriales del Mundo: The IWW's Spanish-Language Press," unpublished paper presented at American Journalism Historians Association convention, Tucson, Ariz., Oct. 7, 2010.

124. Haywood, *Autobiography*, 305.

125. Solicitor to New York Postmaster, Sept. 24, 1917, file 47732, box 77, entry 40, RPOD.

126. Lawyer W. W. Searcy of Brennan, Texas, Chairman, Social Council of Defense, to Burleson, Apr. 18, 1918; and Etta Bullock White to Addison Smith, Sept. 8, 1917, both in file 47732, box 77, entry 40, RPOD.

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128. Solicitor to New York Postmaster, Mar. 19, 1918, and Memorandum for Solicitor, May 17, 1918, both in file 47732, box 77, entry 40, RPOD.

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130. Editorial, "The Pickets of the White House," *Messenger*, Jan. 1918, 8 (italics in original).

131. Editorial, "Free Speech," *Messenger*, Jan. 1918, 9. See William Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America's War for Democracy, 1914–1920* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2001), 96, 112–13.

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133. Inspector Robert Bowen to James Horton, Office of Solicitor, July 28, 1919, fol. B-240, entry 40, RPOD. See also Robert Bowen to William Lamar, Oct. 1, 1919, in the same folder; and Robert Bowen, "Reports on the Radical Press of New York City for Apr. 1921," 38–39, File "Reports on the Radical Press," box 4, entry 47, RPOD. See also Theodore Kornweibel Jr., *"Seeing Red": Federal Campaigns against Black Militancy, 1919–1925* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1999).

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136. Robert A. Hill, "'The Foremost Radical among His Race: Marcus Garvey and the Black Scare, 1918–1921,'" *Prologue: Journal of the National Archives* 16 (Winter 1984): 215.

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138. J. E. Curry to William H. Lamar, Feb. 11, 1918, file 47784, box 82, entry 40, RPOD.

139. William Maxwell to William Lamar and William Lamar to Sen. Henry Ashurst, both May 6, 1918, file 47748, box 78, entry 40, RPOD.

140. "On the Trail of the IWW," *New York Evening Post*, no dates or pages, file 47784, box, 82, entry 40, RPOD.

141. J. E. Curry to William Lamar, Mar. 30, 1918, file 47784, box 82, entry 40, RPOD.

142. Memorandum for the Solicitor, May 3, 1918, file 47784, box 82, entry 40, RPOD.
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145. James Oppenheim, "The Story of the Seven Arts," *American Mercury* 20 (June 1930): 164.
146. See "Let Us Prepare for Peace While There Is War," *Appeal*, Jan. 30, 1915, 1.
147. "Conscription Is Unconstitutional, Is Proved in Petition for Injunction," *Appeal*, June 9, 1917, 1.
148. *Appeal*, June 16, 1917, 4.
149. "War of Democracy Cannot Be Based upon Aim of Conquest," *Appeal*, May 19, 1917, 1. See also "Stand United!" *Appeal*, Apr. 28, 1917, 1.
150. See "Plutocratic Press Has Betrayed the People! Strike Back on 4th of July!" *Appeal*, June 30, 1917, 1; and "Join this Endless Chain for Peace and Democracy," *Appeal*, June 16, 1917, 1.
151. "Shall It Be Peace without Victory or Victory without Peace?" *Appeal*, June 30, 1917, 1. The issue most likely was unavailable because another article, "This Happens Only in Germany," implied the United States was becoming more like autocratic Germany.
152. "What the New Appeal Will Fight For," *New Appeal*, Dec. 22, 1917, 1.
153. "Weekly People, The," July 8, 1918, file 47787, box 82, entry 40, RPOD.
154. "Freedom of the Press in the United States," *Living Age*, Sept. 28, 1918, 77.
155. Morris Hillquit, *Loose Leaves from a Busy Life* (New York: Rand School Press, 1934), 221.
156. President Warren Harding commuted Debs's sentence to time served, effective Christmas Day 1921. "Harding Frees Debs and 23 Others Held for War Violations," *New York Times*, Dec. 24, 1921, 1.
157. Hillquit, *Loose Leaves from a Busy Life*, 169.
158. *U.S. v. Eastman*, 255 Fed. 232 (D.C.). See Zechariah Chafee Jr., *Free Speech in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1964), 42–51.
159. Kathleen Kennedy, "'Casting an Evil Eye on the Youth of the Nation': Motherhood and Political Subversion in the Wartime Prosecution of Kate Richards O'Hare, 1917–1920," *American Studies* 39 (Fall 1998): 111, 107. See also Bernard J. Brommel, "Kate Richards O'Hare: A Midwestern Pacifist's Fight for Free Speech," *North Dakota Quarterly* 54 (Winter 1976): 5–19; and Sally Miller, *From Prairie to Prison: The Life of Social Activist Kate Richards O'Hare* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1993), 144–56.
160. O'Hare was released fourteen months later when Wilson commuted her sentence in response to pressure from radical groups. See Anita Block, "Kate Richards O'Hare," *Call*, Dec. 23, 1917, 10; "Women to Fight Imprisonment of Kate O'Hare," *Call*, June 27, 1919, 1; "Free Kate O'Hare! Is Women's Appeal at Protest Meeting," *Call*, June 29, 1919, 1; and "Kate Richards O'Hare: A Prisoner," *Call*, Dec. 14, 1919, 4SM.
161. See Margaret Blanchard, *Revolutionary Sparks: Freedom of Expression in Modern America* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), 76–77; James Weinstein, *The Decline of Socialism in America* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1986), 90–91; and Mock, *Censorship 1917*, 148.
162. *Schenck v. United States*, 249 U.S. 47 (1919), *Frohwerk v. United States*, 249 U.S. 204 (1919); *Debs v. United States*, 249 U.S. 211 (1919); and *Abrams v. United States* 250 U.S. 616 (1919).
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Conclusion

1. See "Magazine," Adbusters, <https://www.adbusters.org/magazine>; Laura Beeston, "The Ballerina and

the Bull: Adbusters' Micah White on 'The Last Great Social Movement,'" *Link*, accessed July 25, 2013, <http://thelinknewspaper.ca/article/1951>; and Martin Kaste, "Exploring Occupy Wall Street's Adbuster Origins," *NPR*, accessed July 25, 2013, <http://www.npr.org/2011/10/20/141526467/exploring-occupy-wallstreets-adbust-origins>.

2. Sally M. Miller, *Victor Berger and the Promise of Constructive Socialism, 1910–1920* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1973), 201–2.

3. *Milwaukee Socialist Democratic Publishing Co. v. Burleson*, 255 U.S. 407, 424 (1921).

4. *Burleson v. U.S. Workingmen's Co-operative Publishing Association*, 274 Fed. 749 (1921).

5. Joseph R. Conlin, introduction to *The American Radical Press, 1880–1960*, vol. 1, ed. Joseph R. Conlin (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1974), 6, 12.

6. Robert A. Bowen, Bureau of Translations and Radical Publications, "The Radical Press in the United States," 6, submitted Dec. 22, 1920, fol. "Radical Press Nov. 1918–Jan. 1921," box 1, entry 236: "Bimonthly General Intelligence Press Reports of the Justice Department, 1918–1922," RPOD. See also "The Radical Press in the United States," file "Reports on the Radical Press," box 4, entry 47: Office of the Solicitor, Office Files of William H. Lamar, 1912–22, RPOD.

7. William Lamar, Memo to Postmaster General, May 14, 1921, file "Excluding Publications from the Mail," Office Files of William H. Lamar, 1912–22, box 1, entry 47: Office of the Solicitor, Office Files of William H. Lamar, 1912–22, RPOD.

8. "The Freedom of the Press," May 25, 1921, Office Files of William H. Lamar, 1912–22, box 1, entry 47: Office of the Solicitor, Office Files of William H. Lamar, 1912–22, RPOD.

9. Donald Johnson, *The Challenge to American Freedoms: World War I and the Rise of the American Civil Liberties Union* (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1963), 83. Hays resigned in 1922 to head the forerunner of the Motion Picture Association of America, where he instituted the industry's self-censorship system, known as the Hays Code. See Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Censored: Morality Codes, Catholics, and the Movies* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994).

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13. John J. Simon, "Sweezy v. New Hampshire: The Radicalism of Principle," *Monthly Review* 51 (Apr. 2000): accessed Nov. 26, 2011, <http://monthlyreview.org/2000/04/01/sweezy-v-new-hampshire>.

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15. David Armstrong, *A Trumpet to Arms: Alternative Media in America* (Los Angeles: Archer, 1981), 11.

16. John McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011), 6–7.

17. See Peter Richardson, *A Bomb in Every Issue: How the Short, Unruly Life of Ramparts Magazine Changed America* (New York: New Press: 2009); and Robert Newman, "Interview: Dugald Stermer and Ramparts Magazine," *The Society of Publication Designers*, Oct. 11, 2009, accessed Mar. 25, 2011, <http://www.spd.org/2009/10/dugald-stermer-and-ramparts-ma.php>.

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- H-JC Haldeman-Julius Collection. Special Collections, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas
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